■ LIFESTYLE / C1

Filipino art works shine in Sotheby's Easter auction

■ WORLD / A26

China defies Vatican, will ordain 3rd bishop

■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-6

New York's Giuliani for president? No way, says documentary

■ NEWS / A22

Inquirer's HIP magazines jive, sizzle, score

GMA's Saudi mission targets–oil, OFWs, OIC

By Christine O. Avendaño

AWAY FROM POLITICAL DISTRACTIONS AT home, President Macapagal-Arroyo intends to pursue the "three O's" during her visit to Saudi Arabia that was to begin last night—oil, the welfare of overseas Filipino workers and observer status for the Philippines in the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

GMA'S SAUDI/ A13

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, May 8, 2006 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 149 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Water, water, for a week, no solid food for Blaine

PAPANO AKO MAGBABANYO NITO?

NEW YORK—IT IS AS IF someone packed up the Coney Island of a century ago and sent it on a time-traveling subway up to Lincoln Center.

For there, now, is David Blaine, the modern-day Houdini whose latest stunt

WATER/ A13

Batasan 5 free at last

A victory march, not a day of reckoning

By Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER 70 DAYS IN VIRTUAL LIMBO, the so-called "Batasan 5" lawmakers claimed victory yesterday.

Today "will be a victory march for freedom," Rep. Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis said on hearing the news that the Arroyo administration will no longer attempt to arrest him and four other militant congressmen when they leave the protective custody of the House of Representatives today.

"We will not be complacent in the face of Ms Arroyo's fascist attacks against the people. *Tuloy ang laban* (The fight goes on)!" Mariano told the INQUIRER.

Hundreds of supporters of the five legislators had originally planned to set up human shields around the five to protect them from being picked up by the police once they stepped out of the House compound.

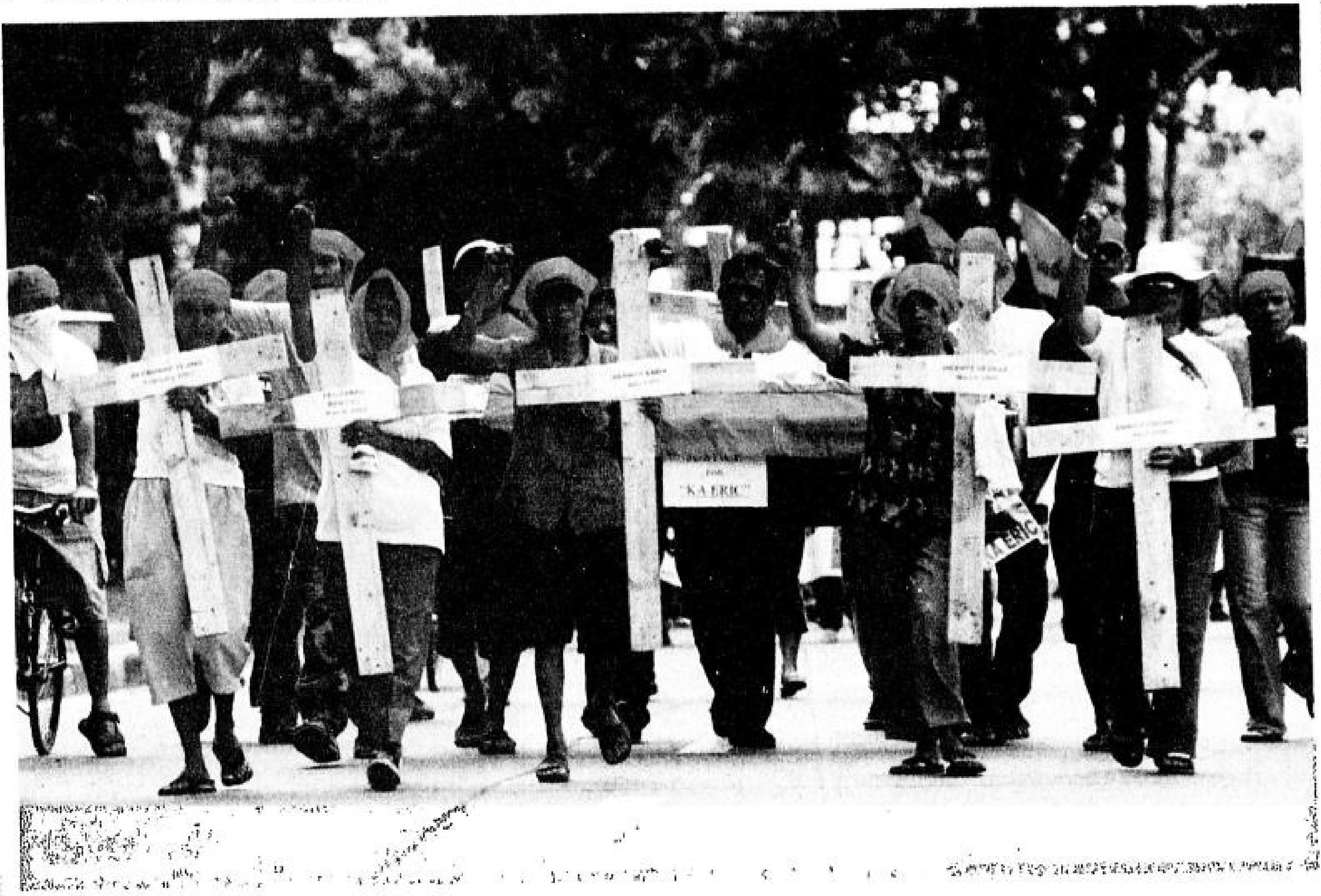
Such a scenario would have risked turning the area around the Batasan into a political battleground.

Now, the group planned to hold a victory march from the Batasan complex to the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, a leader of the group, said the decision of the National Security Council to let them go free affirmed their position from the very beginning. He added: "The question remains: Will the Palace continue to persecute us?"

Rep. Teodoro Casiño also of Bayan Muna said the NSC deci-

A VICTORY/ A12



TRIBUTE TO A FALLEN LEADER

Carrying a coffin, militants march around the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City as they pay tribute to Enrico Cabanit, a Davao del Norte labor leader who was killed by still unidentified men on April 24. Cabanit was buried yesterday. RAFFY LERMA

RP, Thai high courts check authoritarianism

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

HIGH COURTS ARE STEPPING in to halt the tide of creeping authoritarianism in the Philippines and Thailand, where the democratization wave of the 1980s faces threats of reversal from the aggressive exercise of executive powers.

In Bangkok, the Constitutional Court meets today to vote on whether to scrap the April 2 snap election, which plunged Thailand into a constitutional crisis after King Bhumibol Adulyadej, in a rare intervention, branded the balloting "undemocratic" and ordered the court to sort out the political "mess."

The royal order that brought the court into the center of the crisis takes a big step farther the king's earlier intervention shortly after the snap poll, believed to have prompted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to step down following a strong opposition boycott that prevented the convening of a new parliament.

In the Philippines, the Supreme Court, which has a longer tradition of judicial independence than most Southeast Asian judicial systems, issued during the past three weeks a series of decisions clipping President Macapagal-Arroyo's executive powers. The court noted that Ms Arroyo was heading toward abuse of presidential powers and the curtailment of the citizens' political rights.

Both Thaksin and Ms Arroyo have come under increasing criticism for arbitrary exercise of power incompatible with democracy.

The crises of Philippine and Thai democracies have cast questions over the long-term prospects of democracy in Southeast Asia, where most regimes,

RP, THAI/ A12

Gonzalez: Gov't won't play role in their script

By Christine O. Avendaño, Leila B. Salaverria and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SAYING THEY DID NOT want to play into opposition hands, top Malacañang advisers yesterday backed down from their threat to arrest the so-called "Batasan 5" and said the party-list lawmakers were free to go home without fear of arrest—at least for now.

"We don't want to let these people succeed in dramatizing their situation ... They have a script and we don't want to play a role in it," Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said.

The five opposition lawmakers had said they would leave the protective custody of the House of Representatives today and their supporters said they would erect "human shields" around them to protect them from being arrested.

Apparently concerned about a media frenzy if the lawmakers were arrested, Gonzalez announced that the police would no longer touch them.

The police earlier said their units were posted round the clock at the Batasan complex to make the arrest if the lawmakers—Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Liza Maza of Gabriela and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis—tried to leave.

Gonzalez issued a memorandum to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao telling them to keep the police away.

The memo was issued after an emergency meeting of the National Security Council in Malacañang which discussed how to handle the decision of the Batasan 5 to leave the premises, where they had sought shelter since Feb. 27.

The five party-list lawmakers had warned that it would be "politically

BATASAN 5/ A12

Malacañang urged to back off Aragoncillo case

By Philip C. Tubeza, Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

SEN. JOKER ARROYO YESTERDAY advised Malacañang to stay clear of the case of Leandro Aragoncillo, who has been charged in the United States with passing classified information to ousted President Joseph Estrada and other local opposition politicians.

"The prudent course is for the government to back off from trying to rope in President Estrada and company in the Aragoncillo case. What Aragoncillo allegedly did is a violation of US laws," Arroyo said in a statement.

"No Philippine law has been violated. So let us not invent one just so we ensnare Erap."

Arroyo argued that the Philippine government had no role to play in the US prosecution of Aragoncillo, a Filipino-American intelligence analyst, and "is not obligated to do anything."

"It's a violation of US laws. We have no role in it. Why do we get involved for a non-Philippine law violation? It's not our concern," he later said in a phone interview.

Arroyo wondered why the government was in a rush to file another charge against Estrada when it had not wrapped up the plunder case against him after five years of trial. "Why get entangled in another one which, on its face, is not our concern?"

At a federal court trial in Newark, New Jersey, Aragoncillo, 47, last week pleaded guilty to passing classified information to personalities allegedly plotting to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Aragoncillo did not identify the Philippine officials, but federal prosecutors named the alleged plotters as Estrada, opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Ms Arroyo's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, had been quick to declare that rebellion charges could be filed in the Philippines against Estrada and his "unindicted cocon-

MALACAÑANG/ A6

Ex-leper led bid for Culion town status

By Volt Contreras

CULION, PALAWAN—HE MAY HAVE CRIMPED fingers, but the school teacher sharply pointed this former leper colony on the right path out of decades of exclusion and social stigma.

Hilarion Guia accomplished the feat almost single-handedly after his own battle with leprosy to which he practically lost his hands.

The leper-turned-politician bested seven "nonleper" candidates to become Culion's first town mayor in 1995, three years after Congress declared this island a municipality.

That elevation to local government status completed Culion's slow transformation from a place of exile through most of the 20th century into the modest yet forward-looking

EX-LEPER/ A6

RIVERMAYA band members (from left) Rico Blanco, Japs Sergio, Marc Escueta and Mike Elgar pose with their MTV Asia Award for Favorite Artist-Philippines. REUTERS

Rivermaya wins MTV Asia award

By Marinel R. Cruz
Entertainment

RIVERMAYA, WHICH POPULARized songs like "Umuulan, Umaaraw," "Liwanag sa Dilim" and "Awit ng Kabataan," made history on Saturday at the 2006 MTV Asia Awards in Bangkok, becoming the first Filipino rock group to play in the award show's history.

The four-member band, known locally as "Ang Banda ng Bayan," has won MTV Asia's Favorite Artist-Philippines award two straight years now. The winner gets the honor of representing the country at the MTV Asia Awards show.

Rivermaya is also the first Filipino music group to be given a performance slot in the show's five-year history. Regine Velasquez (MTV Philippines Favorite Artist awardee of 2002) shared the spotlight with American singer Mandy Moore in that year when they did a duet of "Cry" at the awards show in Singapore.

Backed up by the string section of the Royal Thai Army Orchestra, Rivermaya's front man Rico Blanco, Mark Escueta (drums), Mike Elgar (guitar) and Japs Sergio (bass) performed "You'll Be Safe Here."

Rivermaya was introduced by Kelly Rowland, awards show host

RIVERMAYA/ A11

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'Ruling could set back land reform'

By Blanche Rivera

A SUPREME COURT RULING COULD EXEMPT around 500,000 hectares of private and public lands claimed to be used as cattle-grazing areas from coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, a research and development group said.

PEACE Foundation Inc., which studies land reform and policies in the Philippines, said the Supreme Court decision on the 3,020-ha Sutton farm in Masbate last year could be used as a ground to exempt landholdings being used for cattle-grazing and livestock from CARP coverage.

"(It) could allow thousands of hectares of lands previously devoted to cattle-raising to remain idle and unproductive under the pretext that it is an industry and therefore outside of the ambit of agrarian reform," PEACE said in a statement.

The SC ruling also alarmed the Department of Agrarian Reform, the government agency tasked to implement CARP.

"Even the DAR was alarmed by the decision, that's why it filed a motion for reconsideration," PEACE research head Danny Carranza said in an earlier press briefing.

He said the DAR was concerned that landowners would apply for exemption or introduce livestock to evade CARP implementation, with the deadline for land acquisition and distribution expiring in 2008.

"The danger about the [SC] decision is that it will reinforce misallocation and maldistribution of scarce land resources," PEACE said.

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In its October 2005 decision, SC said the DAR had no power to regulate livestock farms that had been exempted from CARP through RA 7881, the law that exempted fishponds and prawn farms from CARP coverage.

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The move follows an agreement reached on Saturday by leftist groups, nongovernment organizations and political and church figures under the Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya coalition to hold a sustained information campaign to dissuade the people from supporting the Arroyo administration's bid to effect Charter change.

Candlelight vigils

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Those present at the meeting included KME convenors Bishops Antonio Tobias of Novaliches and Deogracias Iniguez Jr. of Caloocan, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., Akbayan party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros, Joshua Mata of the Alliance of Progressive Labor, Renato Reyes of Bayan Muna and lawyer Lorna Kapunan.

Tobias said after the meeting that the KME's principal objective was for the "truth to be pursued" even as some members of the coalition, such as the leftist labor organization Kilusang Mayo Uno, were openly calling for President Arroyo's ouster.

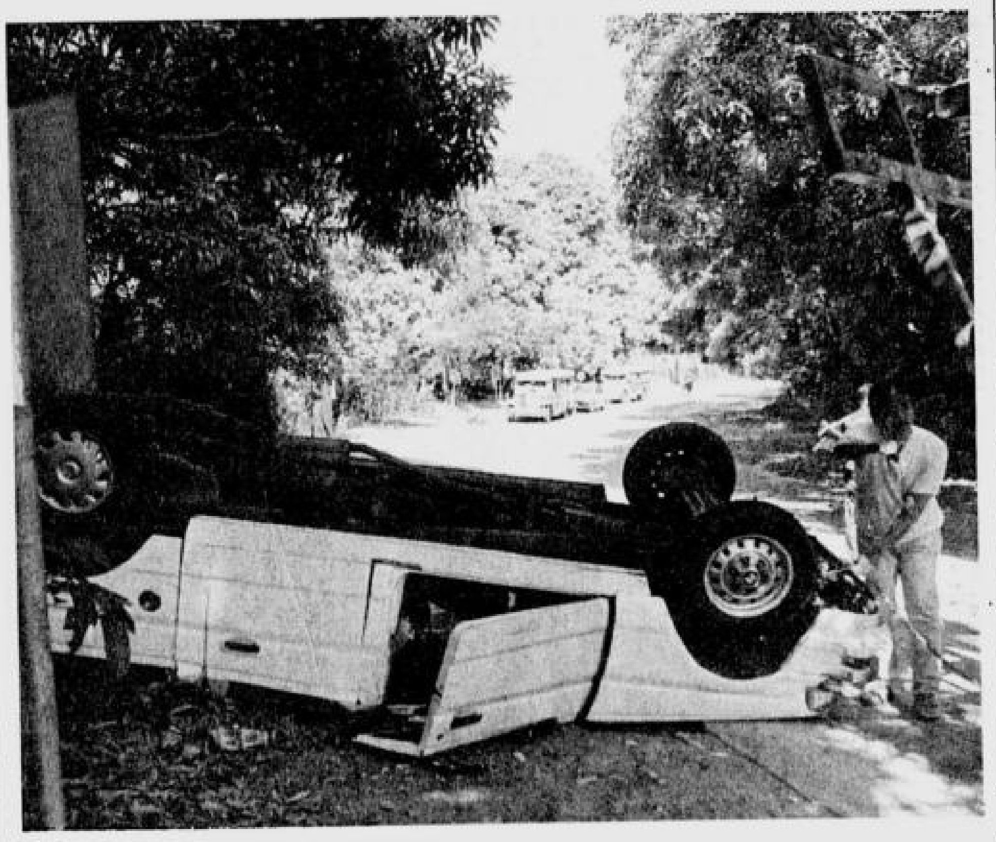
Personal capacity

Iniguez and Tobias told reporters that they attended the meeting in their personal capacities and that they were not representing the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

At the same time, they noted that even the CBCP, while not backing calls for the President's resignation, had expressed reservations about the people's initiative.

"We would just like to show that Ms Arroyo is using Cha-cha to cover up the truth instead of facing the allegations against her and so end the current political crisis," Tobias said.

Jaro Archbishop and CBCP president Angel Lagdameo said in an earlier interview with the INQUIRER that the people's initiative to amend the Charter "might not be a necessity at this time and must be continuously discussed by all concerned." *Nestor P. Burgos Jr. PDI Visayas Bureau and Jerome Aning*



WHY IT PAYS TO BE CAREFUL
An Elf truck lies on its roof after it rolled over yesterday morning on the Marcos Highway in Sitio Cabading, Antipolo City. The driver, Edgardo Albesa, lost control of the vehicle while descending the winding road. Seven people were hurt and were brought to the Amang Rodriguez Medical Center in Marikina City. RAFFY LERMA

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'Da Vinci Code' only a thriller, says Sony

By Christian V. Esguerra

LESS THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE global release of "The Da Vinci Code," its Hollywood studio has clarified that the much-anticipated film is a "work of fiction that does not attack or criticize any religious organization."

"Obviously, the novel on which our film is based on has inspired many conversations about history and religion, but our movie is a thriller, not a religious tract or historical documentary," Jim Kennedy, senior vice president for corporate communications of Sony Pictures Entertainment, told the INQUIRER in an interview via e-mail.

Kennedy's assurance was ostensibly meant to appease Christian sectors either incensed or worried about the inaccuracies—both historical and theological—that the movie might present.

Exciting, entertaining

Critics are concerned that such problems might be unavoidable should the film be faithful to the novel written by Dan Brown, a former school teacher.

Kennedy didn't talk in detail about the movie, saying only that it was an "exciting, entertaining work of fiction."

Opus Dei, the Catholic organization portrayed by Brown as a murderous sect out to protect the 2,000-year-old secret that Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene, earlier asked Sony Pictures to explicitly say that the film was a work of fiction.

"The Da Vinci Code," which stars Oscar winner Tom Hanks, is set for worldwide release on May 19. It will be shown in Philippine theaters beginning May 18.

Sony Pictures appeared to show more sensitivity to Christian sensibility by sponsoring a website, www.TheDaVinciDialogue.com, to allow people to "wrestle with the complex topics raised by the book and the film."

Unique opportunity

"Many religious leaders and organizations, including Opus Dei, agree that the release of the film can provide a unique opportunity to educate people about their work and beliefs," Kennedy said.

The statement seemed to echo the line often given by Brown in the face of criticisms often coming from mostly biblical experts, religious scholars, and art historians.

Despite claiming diligent and informed research, Brown's novel was often attacked for a host of inaccuracies and incredible accusations, not to mention that Jesus Christ's divinity was merely the product of a human declaration.

Fr. Regino Cortes, a Filipino biblical expert, earlier said that Brown was such a "sloppy researcher" that he couldn't even get the right description of Leonardo Da Vinci's Last Supper.

It's a secco, not a fresco, Cortes wrote in his book, "An Exegetical Analysis of The Da Vinci Code," the first one to be written by a Filipino.

Contained clues

In the Brown novel, the painting purportedly contained clues about the supposed Catholic cover-up.

Kennedy said the website provides a forum where "prominent Catholic and other Christian scholars are contributing essays that explore the foundations of faith and its impact on history and our lives."

It contains essays from experts such as Monsignor Francis J. Maniscalco, director of communications for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Jay Kameron Carter, assistant professor in Theology and Black Church Studies at Duke Divinity School; Darrell Bock, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and author of "Breaking The Da Vinci Code"; Rev. Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., professor of Catholic Theology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles; and John L. Allen, Jr., Catholic author and journalist.

Most open-minded

Allen, a long-time Vatican watcher, recently released a book on Opus Dei, arguably the most open-minded piece written by a nonmember on the controversial group formed by St. Josemaria Escriva.

"The primary focus of The Da Vinci Dialogue is to help Christians prepare for the inevitable question that will arise with the release of the film," read a message on the web site.

It also noted that neither Brown nor the film outfit had any editorial control on any of the articles posted.

"None of the Christian experts have been paid for their commentary or insights. This is an open forum where discussion, debate and disagreement are welcome," it said.

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KME members, who met at St. Peter's Church in Quezon City, said the campaign would include holding anti-Cha-cha candlelight vigils every Saturday and a big rally on June 12.

Those present at the meeting included KME convenors Bishops Antonio Tobias of Novaliches and Deogracias Iniguez Jr. of Caloocan, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., Akbayan party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros, Joshua Mata of the Alliance of Progressive Labor, Renato Reyes of Bayan Muna and lawyer Lorna Kapunan.

Tobias said after the meeting that the KME's principal objective was for the "truth to be pursued" even as some members of the coalition, such as the leftist labor organization Kilusang Mayo Uno, were openly calling for President Arroyo's ouster.

Personal capacity

Iniguez and Tobias told reporters that they attended the meeting in their personal capacities and that they were not representing the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

At the same time, they noted that even the CBCP, while not backing calls for the President's resignation, had expressed reservations about the people's initiative.

"We would just like to show that Ms Arroyo is using Cha-cha to cover up the truth instead of facing the allegations against her and so end the current political crisis," Tobias said.

Jaro Archbishop and CBCP president Angel Lagdameo said in an earlier interview with the INQUIRER that the people's initiative to amend the Charter "might not be a necessity at this time and must be continuously discussed by all concerned." *Nestor P. Burgos Jr. PDI Visayas Bureau and Jerome Aning*

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An Elf truck lies on its roof after it rolled over yesterday morning on the Marcos Highway in Sitio Cabading, Antipolo City. The driver, Edgardo Albesa, lost control of the vehicle while descending the winding road. Seven people were hurt and were brought to the Amang Rodriguez Medical Center in Marikina City. RAFFY LERMA

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‘Da Vinci Code’ only a thriller, says Sony

By Christian V. Esguerra

LESS THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE global release of "The Da Vinci Code," its Hollywood studio has clarified that the much-anticipated film is a "work of fiction that does not attack or criticize any religious organization."

"Obviously, the novel on which our film is based on has inspired many conversations about history and religion, but our movie is a thriller, not a religious tract or historical documentary," Jim Kennedy, senior vice president for corporate communications of Sony Pictures Entertainment, told the INQUIRER in an interview via e-mail.

Kennedy's assurance was ostensibly meant to appease Christian sectors either incensed or worried about the inaccuracies—both historical and theological—that the movie might present.

Exciting, entertaining

Critics are concerned that such problems might be unavoidable should the film be faithful to the novel written by Dan Brown, a former school teacher.

Kennedy didn't talk in detail about the movie, saying only that it was an "exciting, entertaining work of fiction."

Opus Dei, the Catholic organization portrayed by Brown as a murderous sect out to protect the 2,000-year-old secret that Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene, earlier asked Sony Pictures to explicitly say that the film was a work of fiction.

"The Da Vinci Code," which stars Oscar winner Tom Hanks, is set for worldwide release on May 19. It will be shown in Philippine theaters beginning May 18.

Sony Pictures appeared to show more sensitivity to Christian sensibility by sponsoring a website, www.TheDaVinciDialogue.com, to allow people to "wrestle with the complex topics raised by the book and the film."

Unique opportunity

"Many religious leaders and organizations, including Opus Dei, agree that the release of the film can provide a unique opportunity to educate people about their work and beliefs," Kennedy said.

The statement seemed to echo the line often given by Brown in the face of criticisms often coming from mostly biblical experts, religious scholars, and art historians.

Despite claiming diligent and informed research, Brown's novel was often attacked for a host of inaccuracies and incredible accusations, not to mention that Jesus Christ's divinity was merely the product of a human declaration.

Fr. Regino Cortes, a Filipino biblical expert, earlier said that Brown was such a "sloppy researcher" that he couldn't even get the right description of Leonardo Da Vinci's Last Supper.

It's a secco, not a fresco, Cortes wrote in his book, "An Exegetical Analysis of The Da Vinci Code," the first one to be written by a Filipino.

Contained clues

In the Brown novel, the painting purportedly contained clues about the supposed Catholic cover-up.

Kennedy said the website provides a forum where "prominent Catholic and other Christian scholars are contributing essays that explore the foundations of faith and its impact on history and our lives."

It contains essays from experts such as Monsignor Francis J. Maniscalco, director of communications for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Jay Kameron Carter, assistant professor in Theology and Black Church Studies at Duke Divinity School; Darrell Bock, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and author of "Breaking The Da Vinci Code"; Rev. Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., professor of Catholic Theology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles; and John L. Allen, Jr., Catholic author and journalist.

Most open-minded

Allen, a long-time Vatican watcher, recently released a book on Opus Dei, arguably the most open-minded piece written by a nonmember on the controversial group formed by St. Josemaria Escriva.

"The primary focus of The Da Vinci Dialogue is to help Christians prepare for the inevitable question that will arise with the release of the film," read a message on the web site.

It also noted that neither Brown nor the film outfit had any editorial control on any of the articles posted.

"None of the Christian experts have been paid for their commentary or insights. This is an open forum where discussion, debate and disagreement are welcome," it said.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Noli takes up cudgels for young Fil-Can

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO has protested the treatment of a 7-year-old Filipino boy by his Canadian school principal and a teacher for eating with a spoon and fork.

At the same time, De Castro asked the Philippine Embassy in Canada to make sure the case filed by a Canada-based group for racial discrimination against the school officials concerned prospered.

Over his radio program "Para Sa Iyo Bayan" on Saturday, De Castro talked to Philippine Ambassador to Canada Chito Brillantes on the phone to say the case was unfortunate and did not speak highly of the Canadians as a people.

De Castro said he was outraged by reports that the boy, Luc Gallardo, was punished by a lunch program monitor at the Ecole Lalande School in Montreal, Canada, for using a spoon and fork when eating like Filipinos normally do.

"Although *hindi ko naman nilalahat ang mga* Canadians, *diyan kasi sa* Quebec *ay medyo mayayabang ang mga tao diyan. Kung* Chinese *kaya ang kumain doon na naka* chopsticks, *pagsasabihan ba nila ng* 'you eat like a pig?" De Castro said. (I don't mean all Canadians, but in Quebec the people are a little arrogant. If it had been a Chinese eating with chopsticks would they have said 'you eat like a pig?')

The boy's mother, Ma. Theresa Gallardo, accused the school board of racism and discrimination and filed a complaint before the Quebec Human Rights Commission against school principal Norman Bergeron and the school's lunch monitor Martin Bertrand.

Brillantes said the embassy had issued a statement condemning the incident and was supporting the case filed by the Center for Research Action on Race Relations on behalf of Luc to protect the Filipino student's rights and to assert his cultural heritage. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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[1] Walzem, R.L., C.J. Dillard, and J.B. German. Crit. Rev. Food & Sci & Nutr. 42:353, 2002. [2] [illegible] Cancer Res 1994;54(S):1969-1975.

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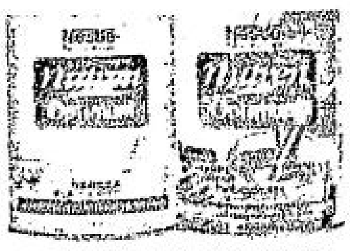

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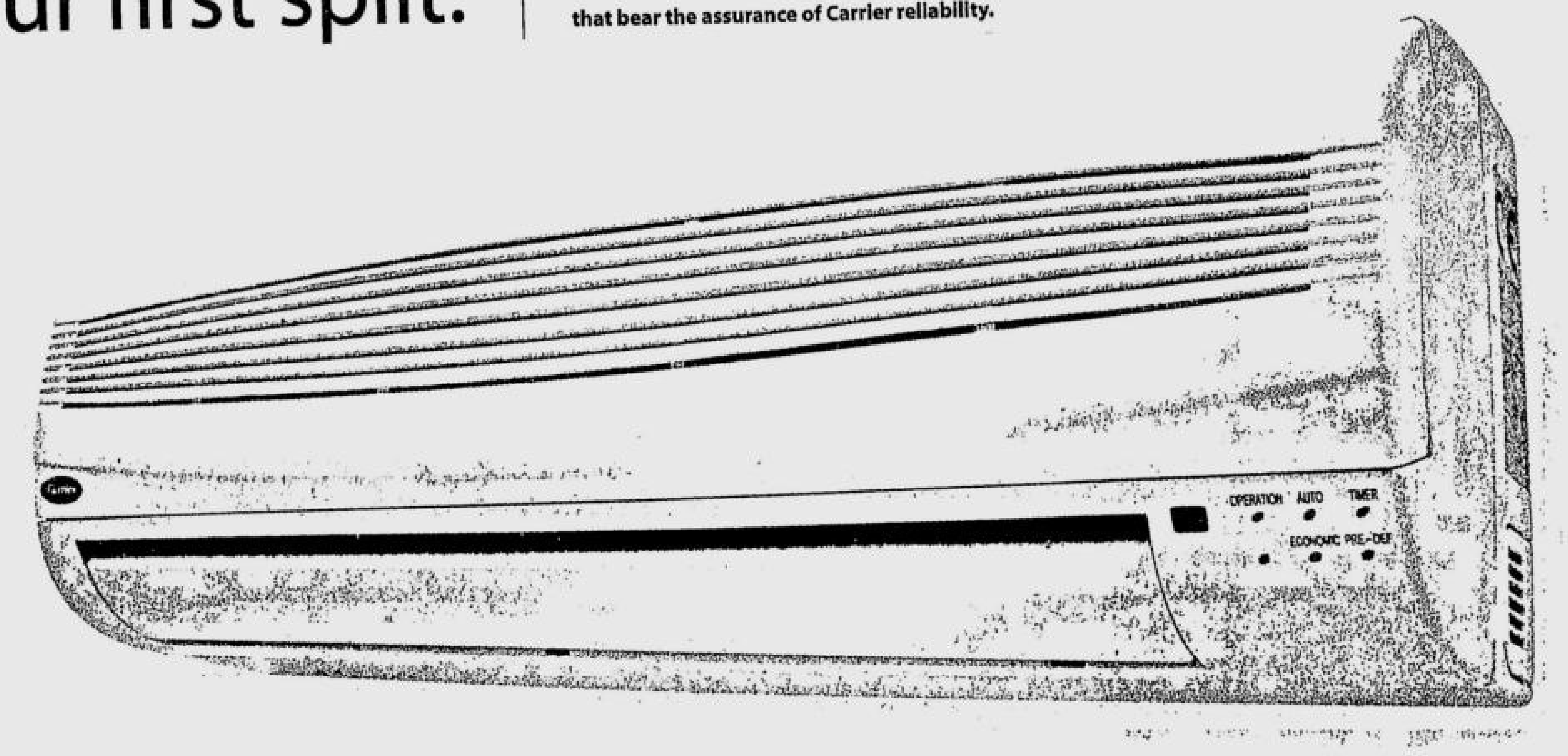

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Leftists adopt their own protective measures

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—AMID THE WAVE of summary executions, abductions, arrest and harassment of leftist activists across the country, members of militant groups have opted to adopt stricter security measures for themselves in order to stay alive and remain unscathed. *(See photo on Page A1.)*

"We value the life of every member. We cherish the lives of our activists. We cry for justice. But we have to undertake extra security measures while asserting our legitimate democratic rights," Robert de Castro, Bayan Muna national deputy secretary general, said in a phone interview.

He, however, did not elaborate on what kind of security measures the militant groups would adopt.

According to De Castro, the government knows that Bayan Muna is not the biggest group but it is the most serious and determined in ousting President Macapagal-Arroyo from office.

"That's why they employ the most brutal attacks against our party and mass organization," he said.

Three Bayan Muna party-list representatives in Congress—Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño and Joel Virador—along with three other militant party-list representatives Liza Maza (Gabriela), Rafael Mariano and Crispin Beltran (Anakpawis) have been hounded with rebellion charges after Ms Arroyo declared a state of national emergency in February.

De Castro claimed that the military and police were wrong if they thought that killing and abducting their members would weaken their determination to fight inside the halls of Congress and in the parliament of the streets.

Two weeks ago, at least six leftist activists were killed in Quezon province and different places in the Bicol region.

On April 30, three youth researchers of a militant peasant group in Quezon were arrested by the military in Catanauan town on suspicion of being New People's Army rebels.

On the same day, a leader of the militant group Anak Bayan went missing in Zamboanga del Sur and was believed abducted.

Last Friday, a leader of the party-list group Anakpawis was abducted by two armed men in Angeles City.

De Castro linked the killings, abductions, arrest and harassment of militant activists to the "vicious" Oplan Bantay Laya, a purported military campaign to destroy the NPA and other leftist groups within five years.

But the military has denied responsibility for the killings and instead pointed the finger at NPA rebels who they claimed had received the "cleansing purge" in the revolutionary movement.

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NATIONAL Democratic Front spokesperson Jorge Madlos or "Ka Oris" points to the April 28 INQUIRER story that said he may have died.
DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Rebel leader alive after all

SURIGAO DEL SUR—THE COMMUNIST National Democratic Front's spokesperson for Mindanao Jorge Madlos, alias Ka Oris, is alive contrary to earlier reports he may have died.

The 58-year-old rebel leader said he was very much alive and leading mostly younger cadres in a dense forest somewhere in this province.

"They said I'm already dead, but how could that be when I am here?" Madlos told reporters on Saturday after he met with them to disprove reports he had been killed in an encounter with Philippine Army troopers in a New People's Army (NPA) camp in Paguibato, Davao City. Another report had it he had died of a kidney ailment.

The NDF is the umbrella organization of the Communist Party of the Philippines, its armed wing the NPA, and other left-leaning groups.

"I was never there," Madlos said, referring to the encounter with the military.

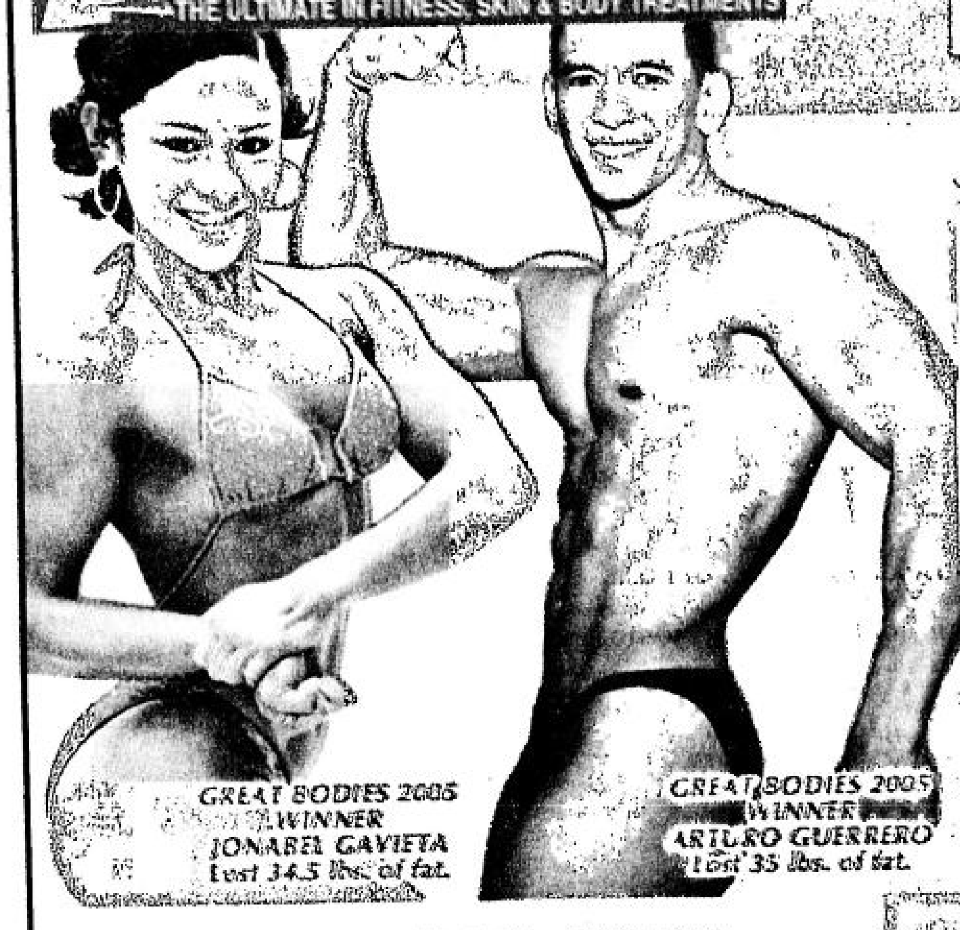
"I wish to inform the people, my comrades, my relatives and friends that I am still very much alive serving the people and the revolution," he said.

When reports came out of his supposed death, Madlos could not be reached for comment. This fanned the speculation he had really died.

The rebel leader cited security and "another important reason" for his long absence from the front. He also denied rumors he had been very sick.

Madlos said he would be in the revolutionary movement for as long as his body allowed him.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau



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Malacañang urged to back off Aragoncillo case

From page A1

spirators."

Gonzalez said the justice department had started coordinating with Department of Foreign Affairs officials to secure copies of Aragoncillo's plea for possible use in a Philippine court.

Lacson bristles

Lacson bristled at Gonzalez's pronouncements.

"I don't know what Secretary Gonzalez's nationality is. He's virtually feeding his compatriots to the lions," Lacson told dzBB radio station from Nairobi, Kenya, where he and other senators were attending an Inter-Parliamentary Union event.

Lacson said he could not say if he should worry about Aragoncillo's guilty plea. He said he had yet to get details of last week's US court hearing.

"Are we facing any charge in America? You can be extradited if there's a request from the country with which we have an extradition treaty. The offense, the crime committed, is that extraditable? There are a lot of steps [in an extradition]," Lacson said.

Lacson had admitted receiving information from his friend and former aide, Supt. Michael Ray Aquino, who was arrested with Aragoncillo in September last year, but maintained this was not classified.

Estrada on defensive

Aquino is accused of passing information from Aragoncillo to Filipino opposition leaders. In October last year, he pleaded not guilty to a US indictment charging him with conspiracy and acting as an unregistered foreign agent.

Ms Arroyo's political adviser, Gabriel Claudio, yesterday said that Estrada and other opposition leaders were "clearly on the defensive."

"Erap and company will now have to lie low until this problem blows over and distance themselves from moves to destabilize the government more convincingly than their previous denials of involvement," Claudio said in a text message.

He said this would have a "sobering effect on the political climate."

"Filipinos may just get what they want now—less political noise and instability and a chance for the country to move forward," Claudio said.

He cited a recent survey by Social Weather Stations that said 58 percent of Filipinos were tired of political bickering over alleged election fraud and other political issues being raised against the President and want the nation to move on.

Legal quicksand

In separate statements, proadministration Representatives Salacnib Baterina of Ilocos Sur and Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur yesterday said the Arroyo administration could not prevent US authorities from indicting Estrada, Lacson and Fuentebella.

The Americans could even ask for their extradition, they said.

"The opposition leaders face legal quicksand because the US courts are a venue where politics and personalities do not matter," said Baterina.

"No less than Aragoncillo admitted that what he provided the opposition had been classified information," he said.

Baterina cautioned Malacañang against jumping the gun pending the resolution of the espionage case in the United States.

"It would be better to monitor the espionage case closely, wait for its termination in the US court, then they can make the necessary legal moves," he said.

Cagas said no amount of denials by opposition figures could help them if they had indeed violated US laws. "It is not far-fetched that former President Estrada and other opposition personalities can be named as principals in Aragoncillo's espionage case."

"They may well have acted as financiers to obtain information from Aragoncillo," as part of a conspiracy to oust Ms Arroyo, Cagas said.

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Ex-leper led bid for Culion town status

From page A1

community that it is today.

It was also the sweet fulfillment of a personal goal for Guia. Now 65, Guia has retired from politics but is still an esteemed elder in this town of 20,000 people. He is a sought-after teacher at the same Jesuit-run school here which he attended in his youth.

As early as the 1960s, or almost three decades before he was declared cured, "I already saw far into the future and knew that leprosy will soon be gone from this island, but the stigma (of this being a leper colony) will continue to haunt especially our children."

EDWIN BACASMAS

FORMER Culion Mayor Hilarion Guia.

Prophetic

He proved prophetic about the disease being banished from Culion.

In 1998, the Department of Health declared that leprosy was no longer a health problem here. Although the old sanitarium still operates, it now just looks after cured leprosy patients who are either bedridden because of severe disabilities or too old with no families to return to.

As for the second part of his forecast, he also saw it coming true in the way former patients and their children who were not afflicted with leprosy "felt embarrassed" about revealing their real address when asked by outsiders.

"They would either say vaguely that they were from Palawan or from Coron," he said, referring to the nearby diving resort town.

Hence, his quest for township was foremost for psychological and not just for the political gains of "my beloved Culion."

Among normal people

"I would admit, ex-patients, including myself, tend to feel guilty about our condition and resort to self-withdrawal whenever we find ourselves among 'normal' people like you," he told the INQUIRER at his home yesterday.

"These tendencies have to stop among the very people of this island," he said. Up to 70-80 percent of Culion's population are said to be or related by blood to former leprosy patients.

But in his case, he had long overcome his own insecurities "because *makapal ang mukha ko* (I'm thick-skinned)," he smiled. "I became mayor, didn't I?"

Originally from Mabini, Batangas, Guia was brought to Culion for treatment in 1950 at age 8, and became a "consistent honor student" at the Jesuit-run St. Ignatius Academy through his elementary and high school years.

For his college studies, he was moved to the Central Luzon Sanitarium in Tala, Caloocan City, where he took up Education at the Holy Rosary College that was run within the facility by the Dominicans.

Political training

There, the farmer's son began acquiring the basic political training for the advocacy he would later wage for Culion, becoming an award-winning campus "orator" and then president of the student council.

By 1965, Guia had earned a degree and was immediately called back by St. Ignatius to teach English and Social Studies.

He would later marry a fellow teacher, Rosalinda Hilao. She was the daughter of a leper but she herself was not stricken by the disease. The couple never had children but became surrogate parents to five kids of different leprosy patients.

Culion's bid for municipality status found its first major ally in Ramon Mitra, then a rising politician in Palawan. Guia said he and Mitra became "close friends" during the latter's congressional election campaigns in the '60s.

When Mitra became a senator in 1971, he pushed a bill to bestow township on Culion, a move backed by his Senate peers who included Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., Guia recalled. President Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial aborted Mitra's move. Congress was padlocked.

Chapel-to-chapel drive

Back in Culion, however, Guia continued explaining to his fellow residents the wisdom of "converting" their community into a full-fledged local government unit. By this time, he was "going chapel to chapel" with Filipino-Spanish priest Fr. Ignacio Moreta, who vigorously supported the idea.

By becoming a municipality, he said, Culion would no longer have to depend on the budget of the Department of Health, which runs the sanitarium. It would be entitled to a share of the national tax collections. "We can demand services from the whole mechanism of the government," he said.

After Edsa I, Mitra became House Speaker. Together with another politician, then Rep. Dave Ponce de Leon, now Palawan vice governor, Mitra revived Culion's township bill.

Culion would be declared a municipality under the Aquino administration in 1992. It held its first mayoralty polls in 1995, which Guia won.

"I've been active most of my life," he said. "It is my way of showing the world that people like me can take positions of leadership and that we have not lost our rights despite our condition."

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Customs raid on warehouses to yield ₱5M

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE RAID LAST WEEK ON 26 WAREHOUSES in Manila used to allegedly store undervalued imported goods is expected to yield an estimated P5 million in revenue for the Bureau of Customs.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the amount would come from the penalties and additional taxes that the bureau would impose on the owners of the imported items which were grossly undervalued and, thus, were not properly taxed.

"Based on initial reports, the BOC would collect an estimated P5 million from the raid of the warehouses," Morales said.

The BOC raided the warehouses located in the RAN Properties Management Corp. compound in Tondo last week based on intelligence information that they supplied fake or improperly taxed items to several Metro Manila malls known for their low-priced goods.

Shopping malls

These include the Baclaran Shopping Mall in Parañaque and the Divisoria, Tutuban and 168 shopping malls in Manila.

Among the items found during the raid were VCD players priced at P50 as listed in import documents.

Morales said the VCD players were "grossly undervalued" since their listed price was even lower than the value of their raw materials.

The undervaluation and misdeclaration of imported goods lead to less taxes collected by the BOC, and less income for the government.

Morales also said yesterday that he expected the tax and duty inventory at the RAN PMC compound to be completed in a week.

He said the inventory of goods was being conducted quickly because the warehouses had a list of their inventory, and the BOC would only need to double-check the data.

Inventory

After the inventory, customs officials would check the goods' import documents to determine their authenticity and check the values of the items listed.

If the items were misdeclared or undervalued, the bureau will require the owners to pay the correct taxes and duties.

Morales also said he was looking into the possible involvement of customs personnel in the undervaluation of goods.

He earlier said he would determine the identities of the customs appraisers and examiners responsible for their release and penalize them.

The raid at the RAN PMC compound was the second the BOC conducted this year against improperly taxed goods.

The first was the raid on the 168 Shopping Mall in March which involved 500 customs personnel. So far, the bureau has collected some P10 million from the previous raid, and expects the figure to rise after all the seized items had been assessed.

17,000 to hit streets in gov't jobs program

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE SENDING 17,000 out-of-school youths, ex-convicts and underprivileged people out on the street for eight months.

These groups, however, would not be turning to crime or joining street protests if the government could help it. They would be repairing damaged streets, removing road and sidewalk obstructions, painting road signs, planting greenery and cleaning drainage, among other things.

Under the Roadside Maintenance-Job Creation Program launched yesterday, 17,200 individuals from the marginalized sector would be given jobs in Metro Manila and Central and Southern Luzon provinces from May 15, 2006 to Jan. 15, 2007.

P500-M budget

The program, for which P500 million has been allotted, is being implemented by several government agencies, namely, the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Jobs Creation, the Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the Philippine National Police, the Public Information Agency, the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Budget and Management.

The heads of the agencies signed a memorandum of agreement for the program's implementation at the DPWH on Friday.

Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said the program would help address the problem of unemployment.

Jobs creation adviser and newly appointed Presidential Management Staff chief Arthur Yap said the undertaking would complement other job-generation programs.

Emergency employment

"Emergency employment is very much needed. This is in tandem with the other pump-priming job creation programs that are being undertaken," Yap said at the MOA signing.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao saw another benefit.

"This will reduce street crimes and the number of people joining rallies, who are paid to participate in them, because they will now have jobs," said Lomibao, who has been involved in dispersing mass protests against the President.

'Congress delaying Marcos funds' release'

By Nelson F. Flores

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON Good Government Commissioner Ricardo Abcede blamed Congress and its preoccupation with the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal for the government's failure to compensate human rights victims of the Marcos regime.

In an interview with reporters after attending a hearing at the Sandiganbayan on Friday, Abcede said the sum of P8 billion has lain idle in the National Treasury for over a year now.

He said the law that would enable the government to release the money to the 10,000 human rights victims—claimants remained stuck in the legislative dockets.

"The money is there. *Pero itong Kongreso natin, bakit puro Garci investigation? Wala namang patutunguhan yan. Ito, this is something concrete na makabubuti sa ating mga mahihirap na kababayan. Dapat ipasa na nila ang batas para maibigay na ang pera sa mga victims ng human rights violations* (But our Congress has been preoccupied with the Garci investigation. That will not lead to anything. While this is something concrete that will benefit our poor countrymen. They should pass the law so the funds could be released to the victims of human rights violations)," Abcede said.

Ill-gotten wealth

Under RA 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, the proceeds of all ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and their associates recovered by the PCGG were supposed to go to the government's land reform program.

Meanwhile, Abcede rebuked Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales for objecting to his initiative to pursue a compromise with the family of former President Ferdinand Marcos.

"*Labag ba sa batas ang ginagawa ko?* (Is what am doing against the law?) There is a Supreme Court directive encouraging amicable settlement of cases like this. *Napakahaba na ng panahon ang inabot ng mga kasong ito.* (So much time has been spent on these cases). The government has spent so much money in litigating these cases and there is still no end in sight. Battle of attrition *ba ang gusto natin?* (Do we want a battle of attrition?)," Abcede asked.

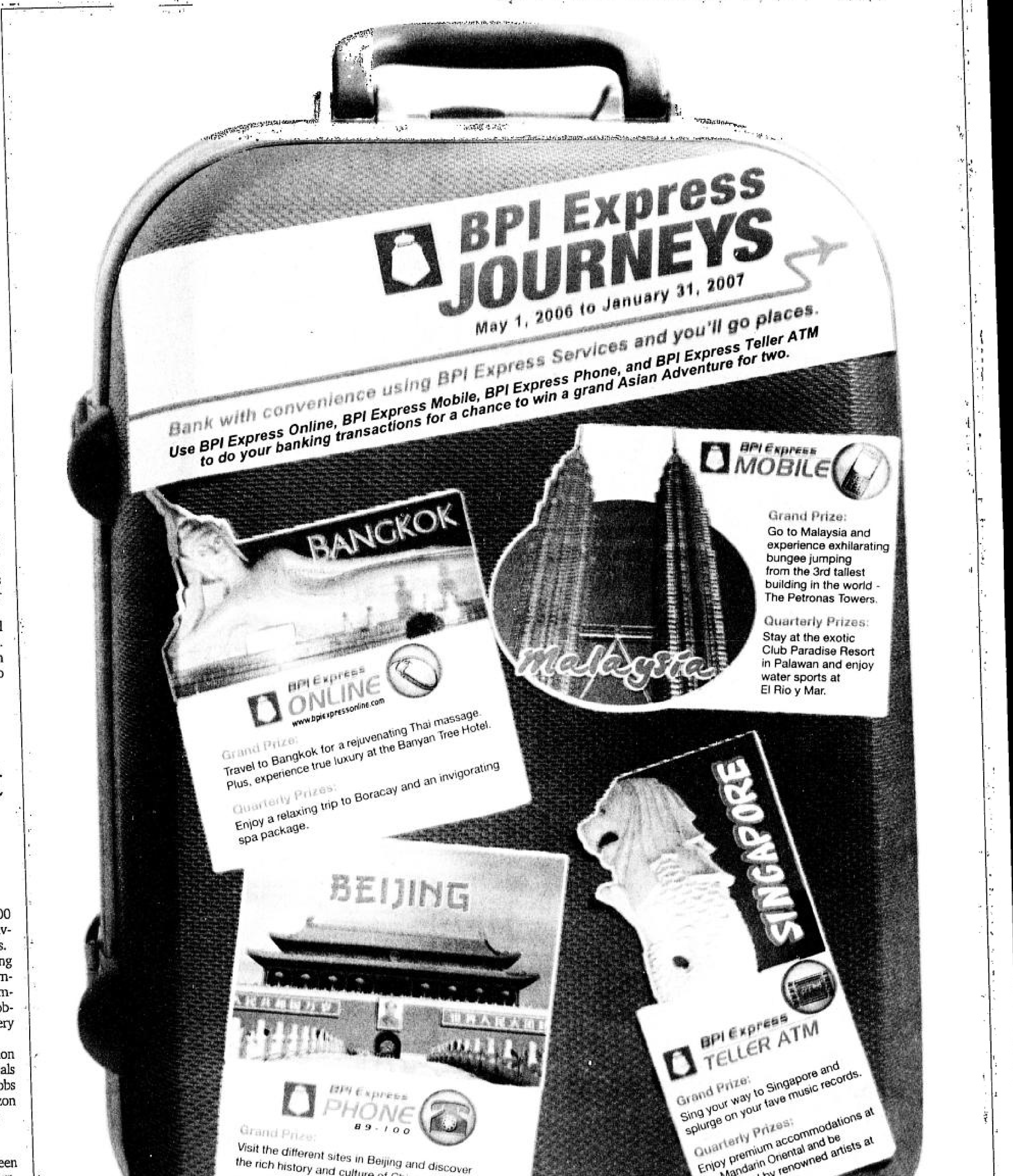
Abcede expressed the belief that former first lady Imelda Marcos was sincere in her desire to bring closure to the Marcos cases.

"We have met one-on-one and I felt her sincerity. She is a very old woman. I believe that at this point, she only wants peace and to leave a different legacy to the Filipino people. Let history judge her. As I have said, I would prefer to get Imelda's millions for the people rather than have the chance to slit her throat," Abcede said.

Compromise talks

Abcede, however, admitted that only the camp of Mrs. Marcos has been involved in the compromise talks with the PCGG so far while the three Marcos children—Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos, Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. and Irene Marcos-Araneta—have yet to get in touch.

"I am hoping that eventually, they will come to us. However, for now, Imelda is the family's chief negotiator. As the widow of the late President Marcos, she is entitled to 50 percent of her husband's estate and has a percentage of what went to her children. Whatever she says will hold sway (with the family)," he said.



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CHEd to ask schools to hold off increases

By Alcuin Papa

THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER Education (CHEd) will try to talk private colleges and universities out of implementing tuition hikes this school year.

But CHEd Chair Dr. Carlito Puno said this would be difficult since tuition had been deregulated and colleges and universities were autonomous as provided by law.

The best he could do would be to ask schools to limit their tuition increases to 3 or 4 percent, he said.

"President Arroyo called me up asking if I could talk to colleges and universities into suspending tuition increases ... or if they could limit it to 3 or 4 percent," Puno told reporters the other day.

He said private schools had the option to increase their tuition provided the hike did not exceed the national inflation rate of 7.6 percent.

Under CHEd Memorandum Order No. 14, private universities and colleges are allowed to increase tuition provided the increase is below the inflation rate. If the increase is more than the inflation rate, the school will have to conduct public consultations and seek the approval of the CHEd.

Earlier, Puno said that 99 Higher Education Institutions (HEI), or 70 percent of private universities and colleges in the National Capital Region (NCR), had filed petitions seeking tuition increases for the school year 2006-2007.

All applications were still under review.

Puno said Congress should enact a law that would properly address the problem of yearly tuition hikes in the private tertiary level.

The National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) lambasted Puno and President Macapagal-Arroyo for failing to stop the yearly tuition hikes which they said had taken a toll on household budgets.

In Ormoc City, Acting Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo said the Department of Education (DepEd) was expecting an enrollment of at least 20 million for both public and private schools this coming June.

The figure was 2 million higher than last year's enrollment of 18 million, Hidalgo said on Friday.

She said enrollment days for school year 2006-2007 would be held two weeks before the school opening in 4,000 private and 38,000 public schools in the country.

She said DepEd was trying its best to address perennial problems such as shortage of teachers, classrooms, books, chairs and desks.

"We're hurrying up the school buildings because the President [initiated] the release of P500 million for classrooms," Hidalgo told the INQUIRER. *With Vicente S. Labro, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Soft drink firms dared to pull soda from schools

A MILITANT STUDENT GROUP HAS CHALlenged giant beverage and food companies in the country to follow the recent initiative of major American soft drink makers and pull out their sugared soft drinks from schools.

Kabataan Party vice president Carl Marc Ramota said cases of obesity among school children were reaching "alarming" proportions. He attributed the problem to lack of physical activities or exercise among children and the easy accessibility to unhealthy food, including soft drinks and junk food.

"Unfortunately, our schools and the Department of Education (DepEd) do not conduct strict monitoring of what the students are actually eating," Ramota said.

He criticized the DepEd for entering into a partnership with a popular beverage company to deliver textbooks to schools throughout the country last year.

Ramota said this made it easier for the soft drink company to promote and sell its products to public schools nationwide.

"We are a tropical country. There are so many alternative healthy drinks and food products that can be sold in schools in place of synthetic and unhealthy foodstuff. DepEd and the government should take this one seriously and act now before the problem reaches gigantic proportions," he said.

Ramota said the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, strict regulations on the part of the DepEd and the cooperation of the beverage industry and other food companies could reverse the alarming trend of obesity.

He cited recent news reports that Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Cadbury Schweppes, and other members of the American Beverage Association were pulling out all sugared soft drinks from US schools.

Ramota also cited a 2002 study conducted by the Asian Food Information Center on weight problems among Asian urban children. The study revealed that one in every four children was overweight or obese. The survey was based on interviews with 1,815 children aged 10 to 12 years old in Manila and other Asian cities.

The group said that although it had been reported that there was a sharp rise in the number of Filipinos going hungry, there was also the parallel problem of obesity among Filipino children and students. *Alcuin Papa*

Not a good day for suspected Yakuza at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

A SUSPECTED YAKUZA GANG MEMBER missed his altar date—and was forced to spend his birthday at the airport besides—after immigration officials barred him from the country.

Kenichi Higasa of Kanagawa, Japan, turned 38 years old last Thursday, the day he arrived in the Philippines and the day he was to marry his Filipino girlfriend Vivian, an interpreter told reporters.

But things didn't turn out as planned for the would-be groom who arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) at 1 p.m. on Japan Airlines flight 741 from Tokyo.

At the airport, immigration profilers pulled him aside for questioning.

They found a mean-looking colored dragon tattooed on Higasa's right arm.

Immigration officials explained that a dragon tattoo on the arm, tattooed dots on the hand and missing fingers were the "trademarks" of a Yakuza gang member.

The Yakuza is a feared Japanese underworld gang involved in numerous criminal enterprises spanning the globe. Erring members have a finger sliced off for offenses against the organization.

Higasa argued that he had been allowed entry into the Philippines just last March.

Upset, he reportedly punched the wall of the immigration office.

To make matters worse, he missed the JAL turnaround flight he was supposed to take back to Japan after he was denied entry.

Higasa ended up sleeping at the airport as he waited for the next available flight to Japan on Friday.

Correction

IN THE MAY 7 ISSUE, an Entertainment story on Page A3-7—"'Voltes V' is back with all-star 'cast'"—misspelled the name of one of the celebrity voice talents. The correct spelling of the voice talent's name is Ricci—not Richie—Chan.

* * *

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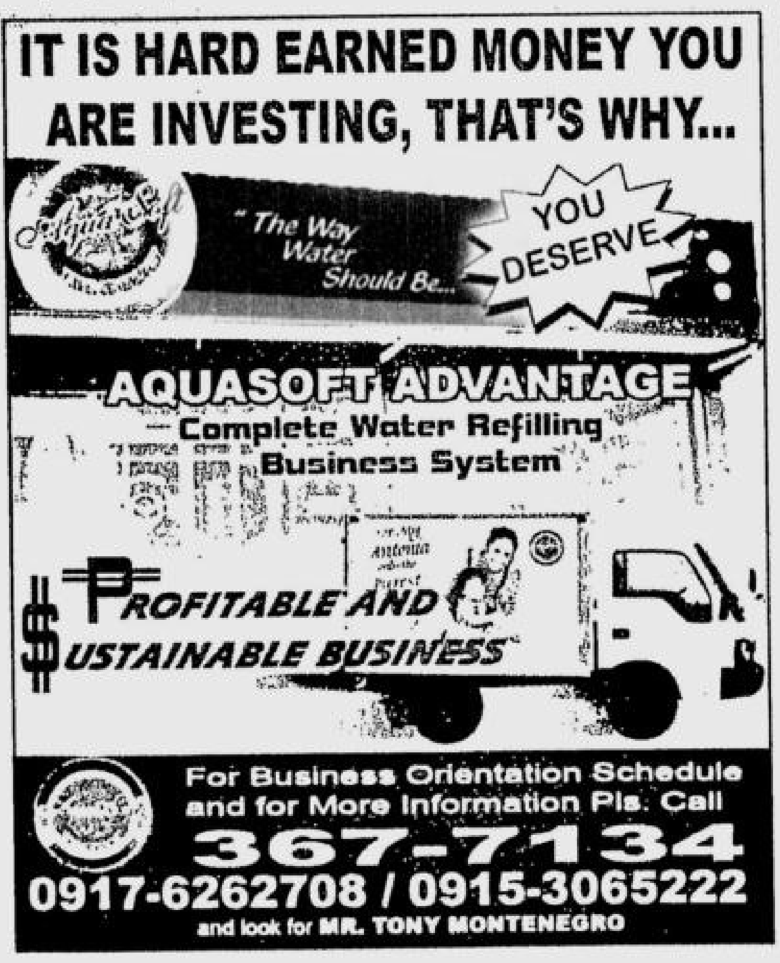
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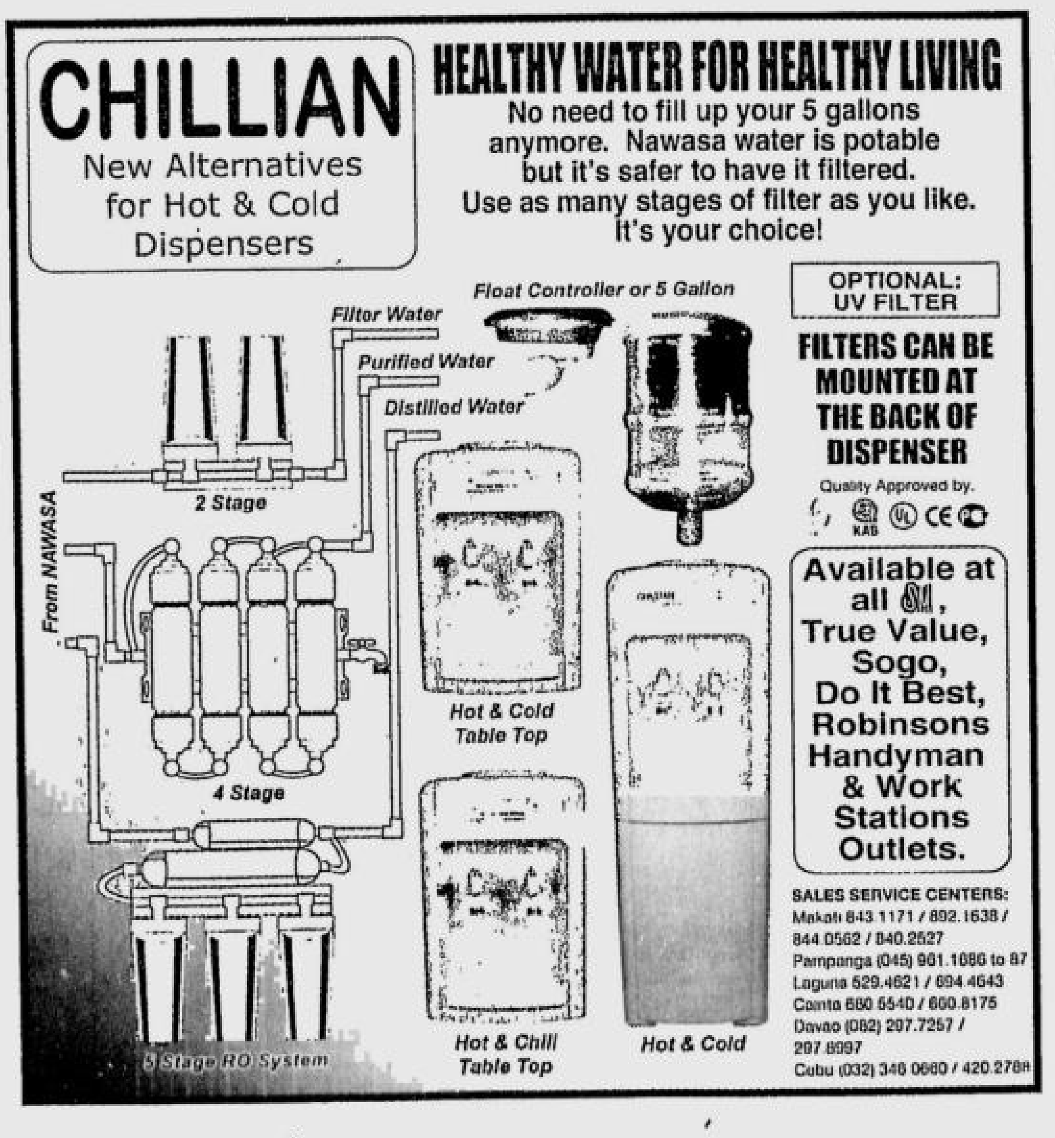

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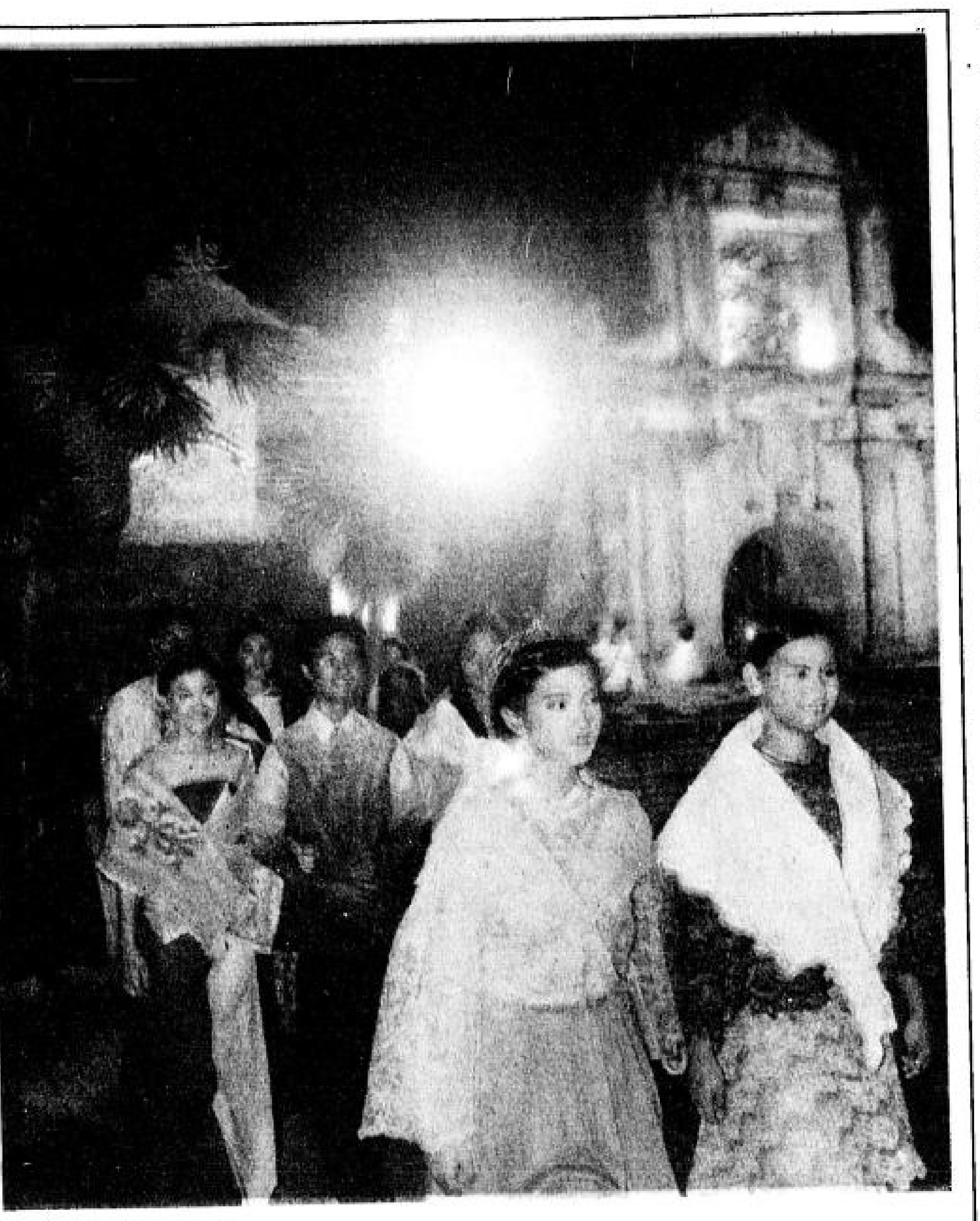


THAT TIME OF YEAR
Decked out in native finery, participants in the Intramuros Santacruzan pass through Fort Santiago as they parade around the Walled City last night. The procession, a highlight of May folk celebrations throughout the country, was sponsored by the Department of Tourism.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

19 nabbed in Laguna 'shabu tiangge'

CALAMBA CITY—NINETEEN MEN, including two of the most wanted drug pushers in Calabarzon, were arrested after members of the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Laguna police raided a suspected "shabu tiangge" (methamphetamine hydrochloride "flea market") in Lumban, Laguna, yesterday.

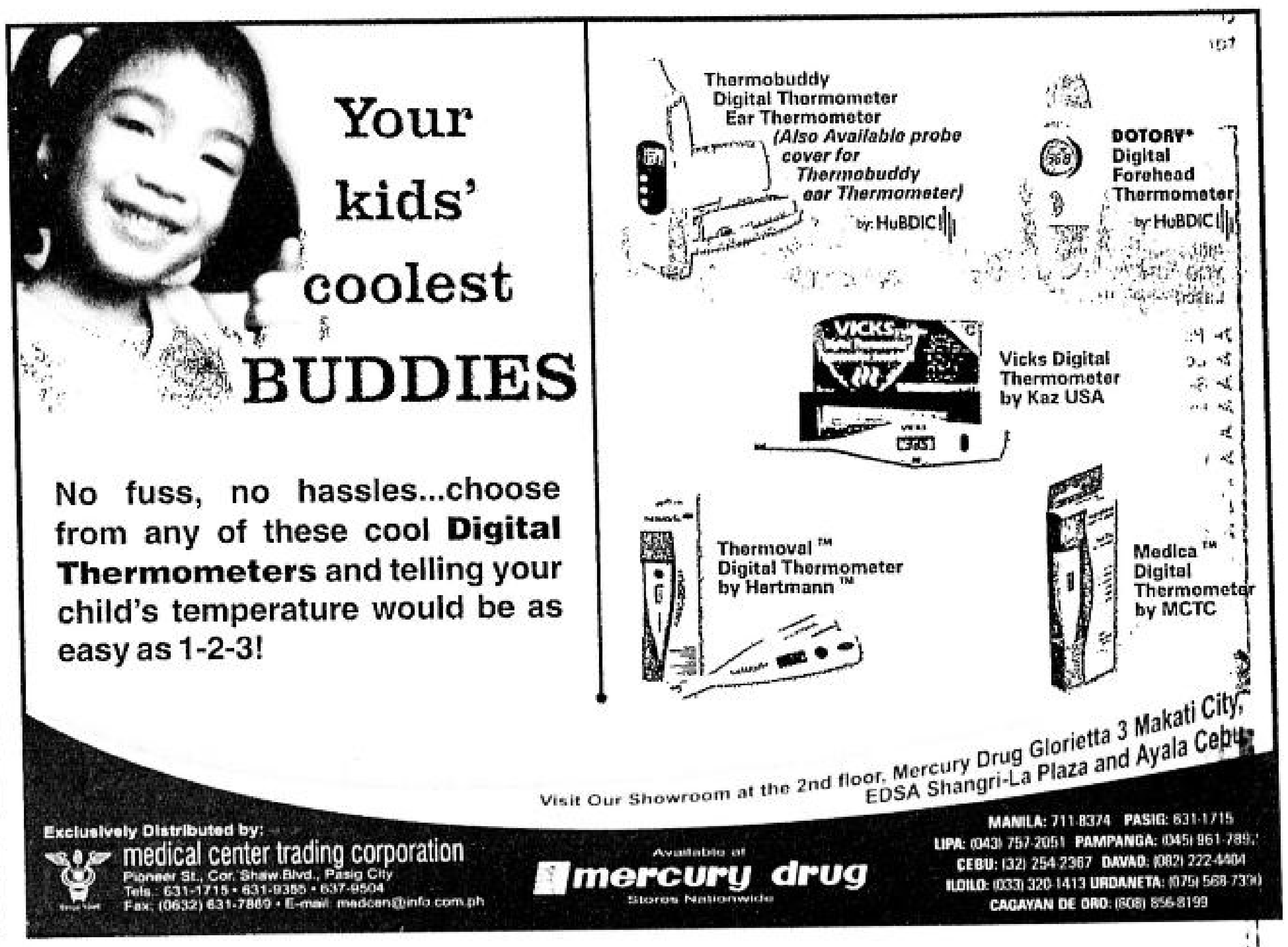
Supt. Ricardo Villanueva, SOG chief, said his group raided three houses in Barangay Maytalang Uno in Lumban at around 11:30 a.m. after almost a month of surveillance.

He said residents had complained to the police that shabu was being sold openly in one of the houses.

Among those arrested were Benjamin Lakbay, 52, and his son Reynaldo, 30, alias Popeye, both on the watch list of suspected drug pushers of the anti-illegal drugs unit of the Calabarzon police.

Benjamin had a warrant of arrest for slight physical injuries, while the younger Lakbay was listed as the most wanted drug peddler in Lumban and named in a warrant of arrest for illegal possession of firearms issued by the Sta. Cruz Regional Trial Court.

Recovered from the two were a still undetermined amount of shabu, a .357 pistol, a .38-cal. revolver, ammunition and drug paraphernalia. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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Batangas mayor padlocks town hall

SAN PASCUAL, BATANGAS—FOR five days now, residents here have had no access to the municipal building after Mayor Mario Magsaysay Jr. had it shut down following a Batangas court's declaration that a rival had actually beat him in the May 2004 election.

Last Tuesday, Judge Ruben Galvez of the Batangas Regional Trial Court ruled that Antonio Dimayuga, who had contested Magsaysay's proclamation, was the rightful winner of the mayoral race.

"(T)he proclamation of the protestee Mario Magsaysay Jr. is hereby annulled and set aside. The protestee is directed to vacate and desist from further performing the function of the Office of the Mayor of (San Pascual)," Galvez said.

About 200 supporters of Magsaysay and Dimayuga gathered at the town hall on Wednesday when the court sheriff tried to implement the writ of execution from Galvez.

But angry supporters of Magsaysay blocked the sheriff and prevented Dimayuga's supporters from entering the building.

Subsequently, Magsaysay ordered his men to padlock all the four entrances to the hall, creating tension in the town.

Insp. Romeo de los Reyes, San Pascual police chief, said he deployed some 60 policemen to ensure peace and order in the premises.

He said Task Force Bantay San Pascual was also set up to prevent a possible confrontation between the supporters of the rival politicians.

On Friday, the INQUIRER tried to interview Magsaysay who had holed up inside his office beginning Wednesday. But his supporters who were guarding the padlocked door prevented journalists from getting inside.

After a few minutes, Magsaysay's secretary finally allowed the journalists to enter the town hall. She said that despite the tension, it was business-as-usual in all the offices.

But she admitted that the delivery of social services had been adversely affected by the row.

A resident, who had traveled for over an hour to have her son's birth registered, got irked when she was told that she could not enter the town hall.

"What kind of a municipal hall is this? Why must they padlock the premises and prevent the entry of people? They must not involve us in the fray," she cried out in anger.

Dimayuga, meanwhile, had camped out with around 50 of his supporters in a nipa hut at the back of the municipal hall.

Dimayuga, a former ally of Magsaysay, said he did not want violence to erupt and the issue could be resolved peacefully and amicably. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 8, 2006
4th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 11:1-18
Gospel: John 10:1-10

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Truly, I say to you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. But the shepherd of the sheep enters by the gate. The keeper opens the gate to him and the sheep hear his voice; he calls each of his sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, rather they will run away from him because they don't recognize a stranger's voice."

Jesus used this comparison, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, I am the gate of the sheep. All who came were thieves and robbers, and the sheep did not hear them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved; he will go in and out freely and find food.

"The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy, but I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness."

Commentary

The Church is growing and breaking borders and boundaries for the Spirit cannot be contained in old ways, traditions, customs, or to just one people. The gift of the Spirit is given as God wills. The Shepherd, the Sheepgate is Jesus—the Word of God made flesh—and whoever hears his voice and follows after him, belongs to the fold, the Church. This is the Word of God who is Jesus, who comes "that all might have life and have it to the full." There is room in the fold for everyone.

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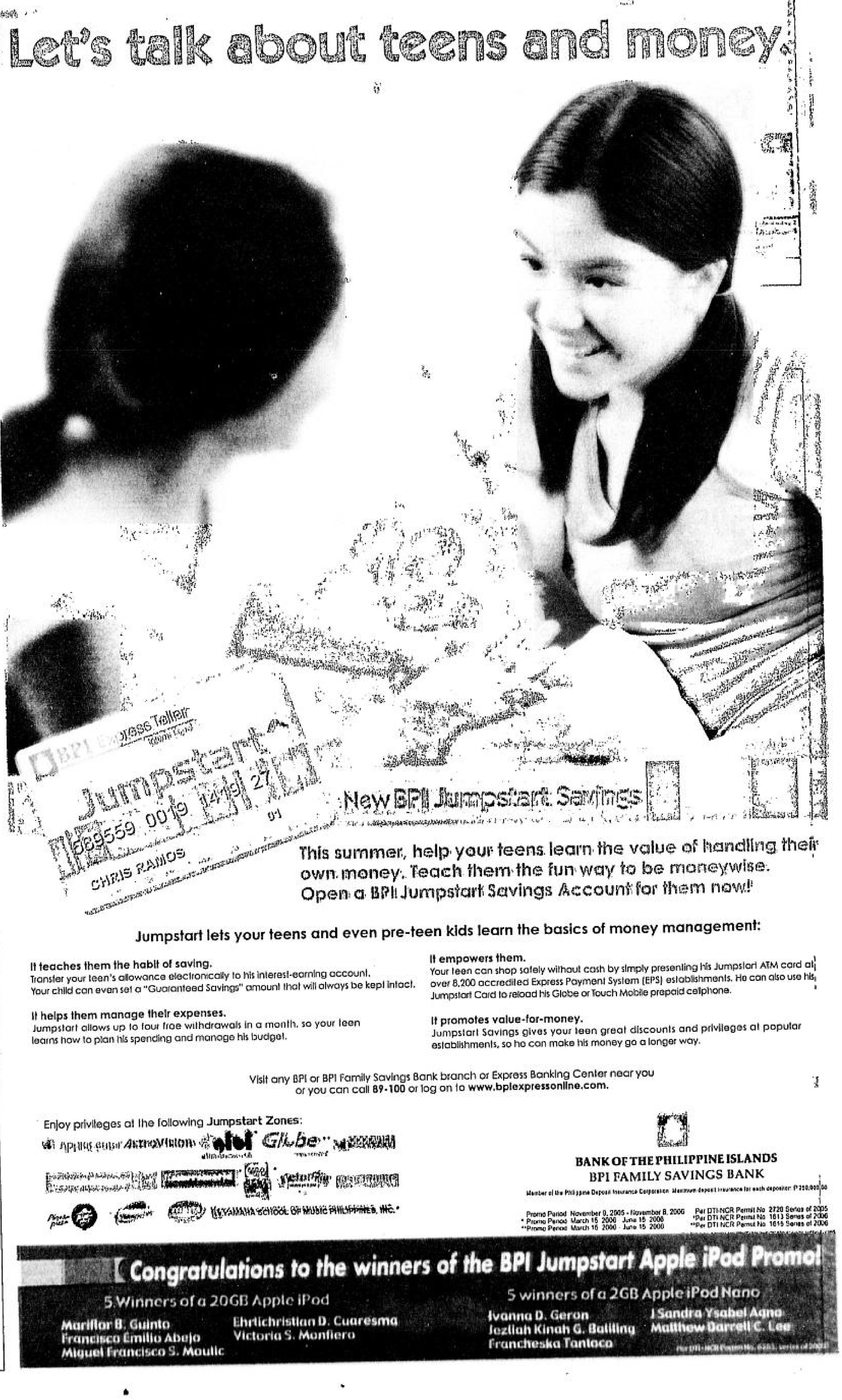

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Australia sets job fair

THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IS holding a job fair in Manila for Filipino professionals and skilled workers on May 17 and 18, in line with its migration program that opens up tens of thousands of jobs for recruits from around the world each year.

Australian Ambassador to the Philippines Tony Hely said Friday a life "free from discrimination" awaited successful applicants in his country.

Interested job seekers will be told the fair's venue after they register with the embassy, according to the mission's media officer Kiel Enrique. They can log on to www.immi.gov.au/skillexpos for more information, or contact Skills Expo Information line at tel. 845-9200 or visit the Australian Embassy website at www.philippines.embassy.gov.au.

The two-day Skilled Migration Expo specifically targets migrants with skills considered to be in "shortage" in Australia, the embassy said.

"Australia operates a global and nondiscriminatory migration policy," Hely said, stressing that "an applicant's nationality, ethnic origin, sex, race and religion play no part in determining eligibility."

The estimated 200,000 Filipinos living in Australia today are one of the most productive immigrant sectors in his country, he added. *Volt Contreras*

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Rivermaya wins MTV Asia award

From page A1

and former member of the Grammy-winning trio Destiny's Child.

According to band manager Lizza Nakpil, Rivermaya's performance had an "overwhelming response and was singled out for praise" from a lineup that included Korn, Hoobastank, Daniel Powter and Rowland.

MTV Japan's managing director Peter Bulland described Rivermaya's performance as "world-class at the level of performances on any stage in the United States or Europe."

In its acceptance speech, Rivermaya dedicated its trophy to "all the bands and fans who have all worked so hard together to make 2006 another great year for Filipino music."

One for Philippines

"This one is for the Philippines," Blanco said in an MTV interview before he went on stage to perform with his group.

Rivermaya also holds the distinction of being the only group to win the Favorite Group award from MTV Philippines for three years—2002, 2003 and 2005.

The group arrived in Bangkok on May 3 and will return to the Philippines on May 9.

The MTV Asia Awards took place at the 5,000-capacity theater of the Siam Paragon in Bangkok.

"The audience was composed of music industry professionals, media, record label representatives as well as fans from across the region," said Nakpil.

On Sunday night, Rivermaya performed in an exclusive club at the RCA entertainment strip in Bangkok, the band manager said.

Special award

"They have been offered additional play dates due to the overwhelming demand for tickets," she told the INQUIRER.

R&B superstars Destiny's Child, which recently disbanded after a string of chart-topping hits, won a special achievement award for its contribution to international pop music.

Rowland, who accepted the award on Saturday night on behalf of the group, then thrilled about 4,600 fans with the first-ever live performance of her upcoming debut solo single, "Gotsta Go."

Rowland and her ex-bandmates, Beyonce Knowles and Michelle Williams, disbanded last year to pursue solo careers, but their MTV Asia Special Achievement in Music award was warranted for "their contribution to the music world and their immeasurable impact on pop culture," MTV Asia said in a statement on its website.

Canadian singer-songwriter Powter was among an array of Western and Asian stars who took the stage in Bangkok. Powter showed off his piano skills with a tender rendition of his worldwide smash ballad "Bad Day," which spent five weeks at No. 1 in the United States earlier this year.

"East meets West" was the theme for some performances. Thai hip-hoppers Thaitanium jammed with British pop heartthrob Simon Webbe, who won an award for Favorite Breakthrough Artist, to showcase his new single "No Worries."

'Twisted Transistor'

American rockers Korn, who kicked off the awards ceremony with a scorching performance of their hit "Twisted Transistor," took the trophy for Favorite Video for that song.

Other winners, determined by MTV viewers in Asia who voted through the Internet and cell phone text messages, included Green Day for Favorite Rock Act, Ricky Martin for Favorite Male and Kelly Clarkson for Favorite Female.

Vicki Zhao was named Favorite Artist for China, while Twins was deemed Hong Kong's most popular act.

Other regional winners were Jal for India, Peterpan for Indonesia, Se7en for Korea, Mawi for Malaysia, Taufik Batisah for Singapore, Wang Leehom for Taiwan and Tata Young for Thailand.

The MTV Asia awards show was broadcast to over 400 million households across the region over the weekend, organizers said.

Last year's MTV Asia Awards, also held in Thailand, doubled as an international fundraising concert for relief work in Asian countries devastated by the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami disaster.

With an AP report

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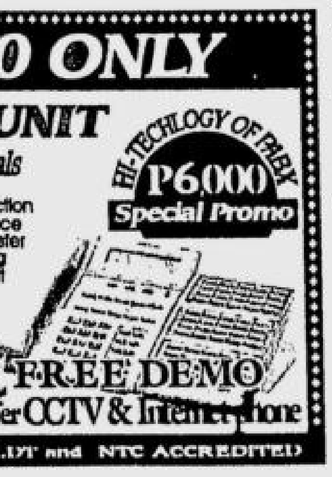

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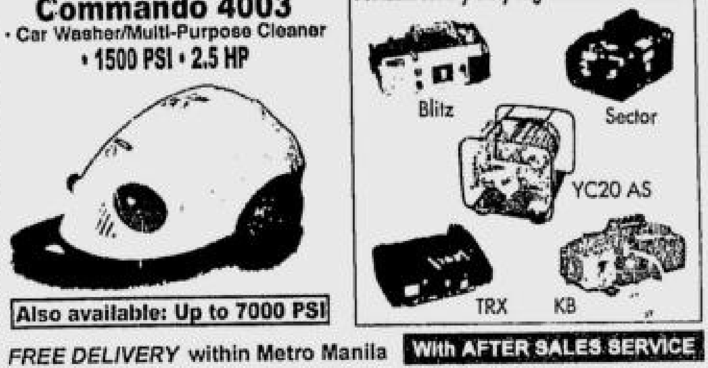

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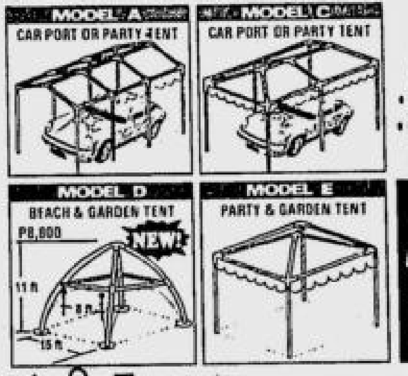

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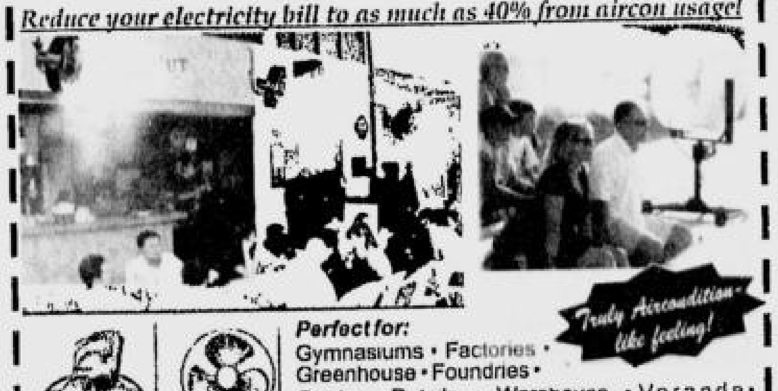

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Batasan 5 free again

From page A1

bloody" for the Arroyo administration if the police arrested them.

The five made the decision to give up House protection after a Makati court rejected an administration attempt to include them and 40 other people in the rebellion charge originally filed against fellow lawmaker Rep. Crispin Beltran of Anakpawis and rebel soldier 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan.

"In view of the order of the regional trial court denying the amended information filed by the DOJ (to include the lawmakers in the rebellion case), the DOJ advises the secretary of the DILG and the PNP to allow the Batasan 5 to leave the House freely and without intervention," Gonzalez said in his order, which he read to the INQUIRER.

But he said the order was "without prejudice to any legal actions that we will take in the next few days."

Gonzalez admitted that it was his "call" but that he had the consensus of the NSC.

Call from JDV

The lawmakers were given protective custody by the House after the PNP threatened to arrest them for alleged involvement in the plot to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Gonzalez said that before the NSC meeting, he got a call from Speaker Jose de Venecia who told him that the House had decided to release the lawmakers from its custody and turn them over to the PNP.

"But we decided here (at the NSC meeting), considering the present legal impasse … there is a gap that's got to be filled, which is either to insist on arresting these people or let them go," Gonzalez said in an interview.

"Anyway, we can always rearrest them once we have secured a (court) reconsideration."

No case

"Technically, there appears to be no case against them," Gonzalez added.

While the government could "bring back the issue of rebellion being a continuing crime, we decided not to invoke that," he said.

Gonzalez said the DOJ would file today a motion to inhibit from the case the Makati judge who denied the department's amended information seeking to include the Batasan 5 in the rebellion case.

At the same time, the DOJ will file either a motion for reconsideration or a new information against the Batasan 5.

THE Batasan 5 lock arms during a recent appearance at the Department of Justice in Manila.

PDI PHOTO

Gonzalez admitted the results of the DOJ actions could take a few days, especially if the Makati RTC reraffled the case.

TRO sought

Anyway, he said, his office was still awaiting the outcome of a Court of Appeals case that the group had filed against the DOJ. The Batasan 5 are seeking a temporary restraining order against a DOJ move to conduct a preliminary investigation of their case.

Gonzalez said President Arroyo, who is in Saudi Arabia, had already talked to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita about the issue of the Batasan 5 and that she had asked Ermita to consult with him.

"The President is leaving the decision to the NSC," Gonzalez said.

The President's political adviser, Gabriel Claudio, said the matter was a "legal issue more than anything else."

"But we are guided by the assessment of the DOJ secretary," Claudio said in a phone interview.

Lomibao attended the NSC meeting.

Before the meeting, Gonzalez intimated to the INQUIRER that he was considering the possibility of letting the Batasan 5 go free.

"I was just thinking that the reason for this attempt (to leave the Batasan complex) is the media. They want a dramatization. If they are arrested, it will be lapped up by the media," he said in a phone interview.

Media frenzy

"I'm sure there will be an editorial in the INQUIRER against me. ABS-CBN will attack me," he said. "I don't think there's any other consequence unless they can bring in the Marines."

Gonzalez added that if the lawmakers were not arrested, there would be no spectacle for the media.

"If I let them go, after two days the story will be dead," he said.

No need to dance

Commenting on Casiño's statement that it would be politically costly for the administration to arrest the Batasan 5, Gonzalez said he did not have to react to every taunt thrown at him.

"Anybody can whistle, but I don't have to dance to their tune. Do you dance every time there is music?" he said.

He also said that an unpopular decision was not necessarily a wrong one.

Gonzalez also warned the party-list representatives against daring the government to lock them up.

"They should not taunt me. I have the law on my side," he said.

Gonzalez also pointed out Makati Judge Jenny Lind Delorino's decision not to admit the amended information including the five lawmakers in the rebellion case only meant that she wanted the department to file a separate case.

Case still open

"The judge did not acquit them," he said.

Contacted last night, PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said he had not yet been told of the NSC decision.

Earlier in the day, he confirmed that top security officials had been holding an emergency meeting to discuss the government's plan of action regarding the Batasan 5.

The congressmen had insisted they could not be arrested without a court warrant.

A victory march, not a day of reckoning

From page A1

sion was "a triumph not only of the Batasan 5 but of every Filipino who believes in freedom, justice and the rule of law."

"Malacañang backtracked out of fear that the people won't take the desecration of our rights sitting down," Casiño said.

Before the administration announced that it was relaxing its position, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said that today would have been "a day of reckoning for the Arroyo government."

"The Arroyo government will be put to test on how it upholds or violates the law, how it treats the citizens' right to due process, and how it confronts political opponents and critics," said Ocampo.

Ocampo, Mariano, Casiño and fellow lawmakers Joel Virador of Bayan Muna and Liza Maza of Gabriela sought protection at the Batasan on Feb. 27 after the Department of Justice accused them of rebellion and the police threatened to arrest them.

The legal basis for their threatened arrest collapsed last week when Makati Judge Jenny Lind Delorino rejected the inclusion of the five and more than 40 other people in an earlier rebellion complaint filed by the government against Rep. Crispin Beltran.

The militant lawmakers have lined up a flurry of activities to celebrate their "big day" today, including a Mass at the House grotto, a thanksgiving lunch with the House Legislative Security Bureau, which has provided them security since Feb. 27, and a family day.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said the five lawmakers were now free as birds.

"This is long overdue. Their continued stay under House protective custody has not augured well for the militant and principled advocacy they are supposed to represent, especially when cases of rebellion have been dismissed (already)," said Nograles, speaking for the ruling administration coalition in the House.

"The House resolution on their custody ends either upon dismissal or the issuance of warrants of arrest," said Nograles.

Call on the public

Earlier, Ocampo challenged Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao to produce valid court-issued warrants of arrest if they would insist on arresting them.

"Do not dare violate the recent Supreme Court decision against warrantless arrests. Do not be used by the Arroyo administration for its vindictive drive to politically persecute and repress us," he said.

Ocampo called on the public to monitor their departure from the Batasan, or "better, to show support" for their cause.

He said that the President should be held accountable for "misusing and misleading the justice system as a means to persecute political activists, critics and dissenters."

Under the plan earlier drawn up by the militants, opposition members of Congress would escort the five lawmakers as they walk out of the Batasan complex and deliver them to the throngs of supporters expected to gather outside.

A happy homecoming

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said hundreds of militants were expected to troop to the Batasan this morning.

"We will make sure that this will become a successful homecoming political party among street parliamentarians outside the gate of the House of Representatives," said Fernando Hicap, chair of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas.

Before the administration announced that it would allow the Batasan 5 to freely leave the legislature, Sen. Joker Arroyo warned the administration that it would end up ditching a long-standing state policy exhorting leftist leaders to join mainstream politics if it insisted on detaining the militant lawmakers.

Arroyo said that for over 50 years, the government had adopted a policy of persuading leftist elements "to abandon the armed struggle and instead join the parliamentary struggle in their campaign for reforms."

"Now that the leftists are participating in the parliamentary system positively and actively, we would wreck that policy by charging and detaining their representatives and thereby depriving their leftist constituency of representation in Congress," Arroyo said in a statement. *With reports from Blanche S. Rivera, TJ Burgonio and DJ Yap*

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Lot Area 305 sqm.
Floor Area: 155 sqm.
L16, B5, No. 4 Monarch St., Caseria Mariposa Vil., BF International
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LOT 12 LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 525 sqm.
Floor Area: 271 sqm.
Lot 17 Blk. 11, No 235 El Grande Ave., BF Homes Int'l Village
Minimum Bid Price: 3,808,000.00

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LOT 13 Lot 04 Blk 07
Lot Area 430 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 726,000.00
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Lot Area 517 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,768,140.00
LOT 15 Lot 16 Blk 16
Lot Area 492 sqm.
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LOT 16 Lot 12 Blk 18
Lot Area 169 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 577,980.00
LOT 17 Lot 22 Blk 20
Lot Area 279 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price 471,000.00
MAKATI CITY
LOT 18 RSDL-CONDO
Floor Area: 187 sqm.
Unit 1002-A, 10/F Skyland Plaza, Sen Gil Puyat Ave., Tindalo St.
Minimum Bid Price: 8,287,500.00
LOT 19 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 398 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk. 21 Nos. 7301-7307, J. Victor St., Brgy. Pio Del Pilar
Minimum Bid Price 5,970,000.00
LOT 20 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 212 sqm.
L2 B24 Kalayaan Ave., Guadalupe Nuevo
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Floor Area 54.59 sqm.
Unit 1812 Cityland Condo 10 Tower 1, Dela Costa St., Salcedo Village
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Floor Area 78 sqm.
U-207/2F, Cattleya Condo, Salcedo St., Legaspi Vil.
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Floor Area 32.21 sqm.
Unit 2507/25F, Millenium Plaza, Makati Ave. cor. Eduque Street
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LOT 24 RSDL-CONDO
Floor Area 145 sqm.
Unit 7-C/ 7th floor Legaspi Towers 100, Legaspi St., Legaspi Village
Minimum Bid Price 4,894,000.00
MALABON
LOT 25 TOWNHSE
Lot Area 84 sqm.
Floor Area 90 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk. 2 Unit 10 Gardenville Townhomes, Panghulo Road, Brgy. Panghulo
Minimum Bid Price: 370,000.00

MANDALUYONG CITY
LOT 26 RSDL-CONDO
Floor Area: 32.11 sqm.
Unit No. 626, 6/F The Princeville Condominium Project 6, S. Laurel St., Brgy Pleasant Hills
Minimum Bid Price: 1,007,000.00
MANILA
LOT 27 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 1,501.3 sqm.
Lot 9 Blk. 13 and Lot 206 Blk. 210, Dalupan cor. Dela Rosa Sts., Brgy. 399 Sampaloc
Minimum Bid Price: 31,000,000.00
LOT 28 RSDL-CONDO
Floor Area: 180.35 sqm.
Units 1211-1212, State Centre Condo Juan Luna St., Binondo
Minimum Bid Price 5,059,000.00
MUNTINLUPA CITY
LOT 29 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 6,000 sqm.
Dead End Yellowbell St, South Greenheights Subd. Bgy. Putatan
Minimum Bid Price: 6,300,000.00
LOT 30 LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 885 sqm.
Floor Area 294.5 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk. 16, No 204 San Juanico cor Apo Sts., Ayala Alabang Village, Alabang
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Lot Area 618 sqm.
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LOT 37 Unit 2002/ 20F
Floor Area: 157.17 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price 6,012,000.00
PASAY CITY
LOT 38 LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,215.57 sqm.
Floor Area 1,053 sqm.
Blk. 19 No. 2230 Tolentino St., Brgy. 120, San Roque
Minimum Bid Price: 16,800,000.00
LOT 39 LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 79 sqm.
Floor Area 210 sqm.
Lot 3, No. 612-D Dona Catalina Gamban St., Brgy. San Roque
Minimum Bid Price: 1,406,000.00
LOT 40 TOWNHSE
Lot Area 62.5 sqm.
Floor Area: 143 sqm.
U-6, Lot 3 Blk1, EDSA Mansion, No. 670 EDSA
Minimum Bid Price: 2,801,000.00
LOT 41 TOWNHSE
Lot Area 62.5 sqm.
Floor Area 143 sqm.
U-7, Lot 2 Blk 1, EDSA Mansion, No. 670 EDSA
Minimum Bid Price 2,634,000.00
PASIG CITY
LOT 42 CONDO
Floor Area 140 + 12.5 sqm.
1504/15th Flr, Centerpoint Condo, Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center
Minimum Bid Price: 4,233,000.00
LOT 43 RSDL-CONDO
Floor Area 194.86 sqm.
Unit 1506, 15th/F Horizon Condominium, Meralco Ave., Ortigas Center
Minimum Bid Price: 6,294,000.00
LOT 44 RSDL-CONDO
Floor Area: 117.33 sqm.
Unit 235 2/F Chateau Verde E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue
Minimum Bid Price: 3,500,000.00
LOT 45 RSDL-CONDO
Floor Area: 73.97 + 18 sqm.
Unit II-CF-201, with parking slot II-C-22, Hampton Garden Condo, Pasig Blvd Extension, Brgy Maybunga
Minimum Bid Price 2,207,000.00
QUEZON CITY
LOT 46 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 192.36 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk. 70, No. 85 West Riverside St., Sn Francisco Del Monte
Minimum Bid Price: 1,082,000.00

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Lot Area 448 sqm.
Floor Area 205.5 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk. 4No. 12 President Roxas St., Commonwealth Heights Subd., Brgy. Commonwealth
Minimum Bid Price. 1,861,000.00
LOT 48 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 1,170 sqm.
Lot 2 and Lot 1-A Blk. 3 Kalaw St. cor Congressional Ave., Extn. Meranila Subd., Brgy Culiat
Minimum Bid Price 8,892,000.00
LOT 49 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 300 sqm.
Lot 26 Blk 67, Royal St. North Fairview Subd., Phase 8
Minimum Bid Price 756,000.00
LOT 50 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 1,000 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 8 Loyola Grand Villas
Minimum Bid Price 6,000,000.00
LOT 51 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 725 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk. 3 Along Balintawak St, Phase 4, Ayala Heights, Brgy. Pansol
Minimum Bid Price. 13,086,000.00
LOT 52 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 621 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 6, Road Lot 3 and 5, Sunny Side Heights Subd., Capitol District
Minimum Bid Price: 1,739,000.00
LOT 53 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 1,004 sqm.
Lot 718-B-4 Philand Subdivision., Brgy Pasong Tamo Tandang Sora
Minimum Bid Price 2,710,800.00
LOT 54 LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 127 sqm.
Floor Area: 213 sqm.
Unit I, The Enclave, Green Meadows Ave., Libis
Minimum Bid Price 13,500,000.00
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LOT 55 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 319 sqm.
Lot 25/Blk 11 & Lot 32/Blk 10 located along 12th St, Metro Villa Centre, Bo Mapulang Lupa
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LOT 56 LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 608 sqm.
Floor Area 121 sqm.
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Minimum Bid Price 2,852,000.00

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RP, Thai high courts check …

From page A1

though elected, are run by autocratic leaders uninhibited by strong parliamentary oppositions.

The latest Philippine Supreme Court decision declared illegal Ms Arroyo's acquisition of powers to issue decrees in implementing her declaration of national emergency on Feb. 24.

Weak opposition

The key roles of the high courts in both countries in checking authoritarian trends underline the weakness of opposition parliamentary parties in acting as countervailing force to executive concentration of powers.

Although the main Thai opposition parties, through their boycott, have succeeded in driving Thaksin out of office, the issue in the Thai crisis is deeper and more fundamental than that.

It is about whether Thaksin's resignation and the invalidation of the April 2 snap election system would resolve the crisis, which had concerned the king so much. He feared that the celebration of his 60th anniversary on the throne in June would be marred by the prolonged constitutional crisis.

How the Thai Constitutional Court resolves this issue should be of interest to Filipinos who have been agitating for Ms Arroyo's resignation and snap elections to resolve their constitutional impasse. This stemmed from the legitimacy issue rocking the Arroyo administration for nearly a year over allegations she manipulated the results of the 2004 election. To the anti-Arroyo forces, resignation and snap elections are the two issues that define the mantra of their campaign to unseat her.

Rare intervention

In directing the constitutional judges to resolve the impasse, the Thai king made a rare direct intervention in politics after declaring the April 2 election boycotted by the main opposition parties "undemocratic."

The king, however, turned down an opposition demand to name a new prime minister. It was the first direct royal intervention since 1992, when the king stepped in to end a bloody confrontation between "people power" protesters and a military regime. That intervention marked the turning point of Thailand to democracy.

The court was considering complaints lodged by university law professors who argued that the April 2 snap election and a follow-up vote on April 23 were framed as a referendum to endorse the regime of Thaksin and so were "not democratic."

Thaksin called the snap election just more than a year after winning a second landslide, hoping it would defuse street protests accusing him of corruption and abuse of power and demanding his resignation.

Thaksin's Thai RakThai Party won the polls with a reduced parliamentary majority, but his victory was undermined by an opposition boycott and a strong protest vote. Rather than ending the crisis, the election result intensified it.

Unable to convene

The Thai Parliament was unable to convene and elect a new prime minister because the boycott left 40 of the parliament's 500 seats empty. Under Thai election law, parliament cannot meet unless all the seats are filled.

Although Thailand has held a round of by-elections since April 2, 14 seats remain vacant. The Supreme Administrative Court, one of the three top courts, suspended a by-election on April 29, which was to fill the vacancies, after a finding that it "has been unconstitutionally organized."

There's doubt that even if the April 29 by-election had been held, it would have resolved the issue of filling all the seats and of making the results democratic.

As pointed out by a BBC News report, "There is yet another dilemma facing Thai politicians. Because just one major party took part in the election, just one party will form the vast majority of the new government—a situation almost unheard of in a democratic country."

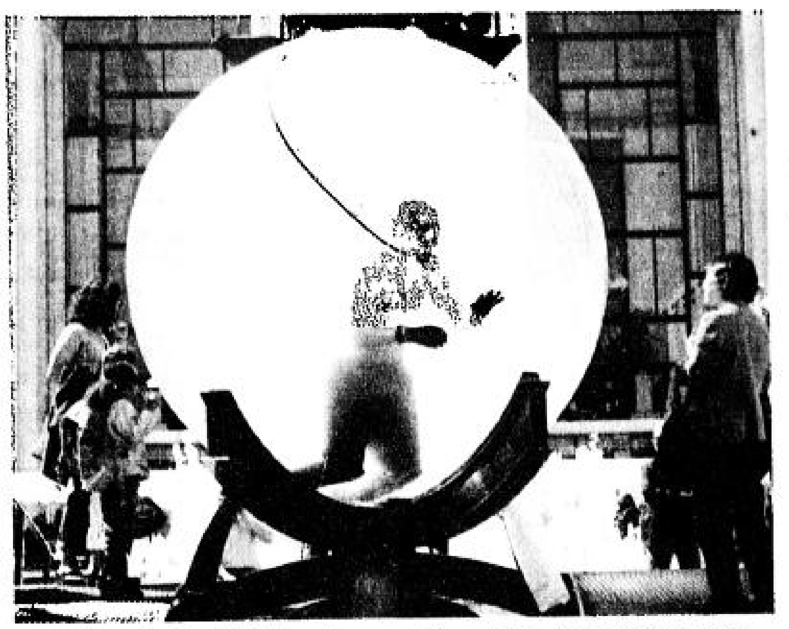
Renewed protests seen

After the suspension of the April 29 by-election, the Constitutional Court now has to consider the option of annulling the snap election. The country is in a state of political paralysis while it awaits answers to the question of what happens when the 30-day deadline for forming a government expires.

Although Thaksin has resigned, he has handed over day-to-day administrative work to Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Minister Chidchai Vanasatidya.

The opposition parties and the leader of the anti-Thaksin protests, Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva, have pledged to take part in new elections. "Whatever the court's results, we will be ready for it. If we have to launch an election campaign we will be ready."

The opposition parties said, however, that winning the new election would be difficult given the lack of resources for a large campaign. Whether or not Thaksin would run for prime minister in fresh election, what seems certain is his reentry in politics would bring back protests in the streets.



STUNT artist David Blaine, immersed in an 8-foot sphere filled with water, waves to visitors observing his latest stunt—spending a week living in the sphere—in the plaza of New York's Lincoln Center. AP

Water, water, for a week, no solid food for Blaine

From page A1

involves living for seven days in an eight-foot sphere of water in the reflected majesty of the Metropolitan Opera house and the site's other august performance halls.

Blaine, whose previous stunts include encasing himself in a block of ice for 62 hours, standing atop an 80-foot pole for 35 hours and burying himself in a plexiglass coffin for seven days without food or water, seems to love nothing more than making a spectacle of himself.

Since about 1 p.m. on Monday last week, Blaine has been living underwater and breathing through an air tube, taking in only Gatorade and other liquid nutrients.

Already pruny but otherwise in decent health, Blaine is scheduled to stay in his aquarium until about 9:30 p.m. on Monday this week, when he will be taken from the water, locked in chains and placed back in the tank.

Then he will simultaneously try to escape from the chains and break the world record for holding one's breath, currently eight minutes and 58 seconds. All of it, on live television, as part of a two-hour ABC special.

If the performance seems a bit out of character for the environs of Placido Domingo, Yo-Yo Ma and Suzanne Farrell, Blaine's feat could also be said to explore the boundaries of art and commerce, encompassing the culture's obsession with reality television while also experimenting with the limits of human achievement.

For a society growing tired of celebrities eating bugs and aspiring actors playing mind games on a deserted island, Blaine's placidly floating figure elevates spectacle to a sort of performance art.

"No one would analogize what David Blaine does to what occurs on our stages," said Reynold Levy, the president of Lincoln Center.

"But the emotions he evokes, the feelings he has engendered, are universal. He is doing to New Yorkers what almost no one can. He's stopping them in their tracks. I look at their faces, and I see complete wonder and bewilderment," Levy added. *New York Times News Service*

GMA's Saudi mission—3 O's

From page A1

Ms Arroyo flew yesterday to Riyadh from Macau, where she attended the wedding on Saturday of the stepdaughter of Speaker Jose de Venecia.

In a departure statement from Macau issued by the Palace, Ms Arroyo said her four-day state visit to Saudi Arabia "aims to secure our energy supplies at a time of necessity, serve the welfare of our overseas workers, and forge the prospects of peace in Mindanao."

Ms Arroyo has a lean delegation that includes Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla and Trade Secretary Peter Favila. Also on the trip are lawmakers led by Senate energy subcommittee chair Miriam Defensor-Santiago and her House counterpart, Rep. Alipio Cirilo Badelles.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the purpose of the trip "could be summarized as the three O's—oil, OFWs and OIC."

Keeping oil prices down

In her statement, Ms Arroyo said she would raise with Saudi officials the matter of "what we can do together with other energy-producing nations to keep the supply of oil high and the price of oil down, as much as possible."

"As a developing nation, the Philippines is hit hard by the high price of oil, and I look to our Saudi friends to help us pioneer new and innovative ways to become energy independent," she said.

Energy security is indispensable in the fight against poverty, she said.

Peace in Mindanao

Ms Arroyo said that in her meeting with King Abdullah, she would ask for his support for Philippine observer status in the OIC to help bring peace to Mindanao.

"The work of the king in helping to bring peace to the Muslim south of the Philippines will truly be a global milestone as we demonstrate to the world that christian and Muslim nations can stop and resolve war," she said.

About one million Filipinos work in Saudi Arabia and, with their dollar remittances, have been a major pillar of the country's economy.

But some of them grabbed headlines at home last month when two Filipinos arrested in Jeddah reportedly admitted killing three of six compatriots who had been reported missing and whose disappearance coincided with the discovery of chopped-up body parts.

Meeting Pinoy communities

Bunye said Ms Arroyo was expected to meet with the Filipino communities in different Saudi cities.

Ms Arroyo said she intended to look into the welfare of the Filipino workers.

"Filipinos are proud of the work they do in the kingdom, and I share their desire to help build the megacities in that part of the world while they [take] resources home to help build shelter for their families and education for their children," she said.

But she reminded them that Filipinos "must be good visitors in any country where they work."

"We shall fight for fairness and due process in their treatment, but we appeal for their strict obedience to the laws of the host nation, as we so demand of foreigners in our own land," she said.

The President and her party are scheduled to return home on May 11.

Business in Kuwait

Foreign Secretary Romulo will also visit Kuwait this week to look into the situation of more than 100,000 Filipinos there and explore "legal remedies" for two female workers who had been sentenced to death.

Romulo will meet with the emir, the crown prince, the prime minister and the foreign minister.

"In particular, I hope we can explore legal remedies that will address our concerns over Filipino nationals who have been meted capital punishment," he said in a statement.

Runaway Filipinos

One of the female OFWs is Marilou Ranario, according to Pedro Chan, an official of the DFA Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs.

Ranario is a teacher from Surigao del Sur who was sentenced to death by a Kuwaiti court for allegedly stabbing and killing her employer last year.

Chan said the Philippine government would also seek the possible repatriation of more than 200 runaway OFWs in Kuwait.

"At any given time, we have 200 to 250 runaways. Every year, the emir (gives) free use of his jumbo jet for the repatriation of foreign workers," Chan said.

Last year, some 200 OFWs were able to return to the Philippines on the emir's 747 airplane, Chan said.

Renationalize Petron

The militant fisherfolk alliance Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas urged Ms Arroyo to discuss with Saudi Aramco officials the government's possible reacquisition of its 40 percent share in oil refiner Petron Corp.

It said Ms Arroyo should discuss the re-nationalization of Petron to enable the government to more effectively soften the impact of high oil prices on consumers.

Philippine National Oil Co., like Saudi Aramco, owns 40 percent of the oil firm. The remaining 20 percent is held by the public. *With reports from Nikko Dizon and Abigail L. Ho*

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OPINION

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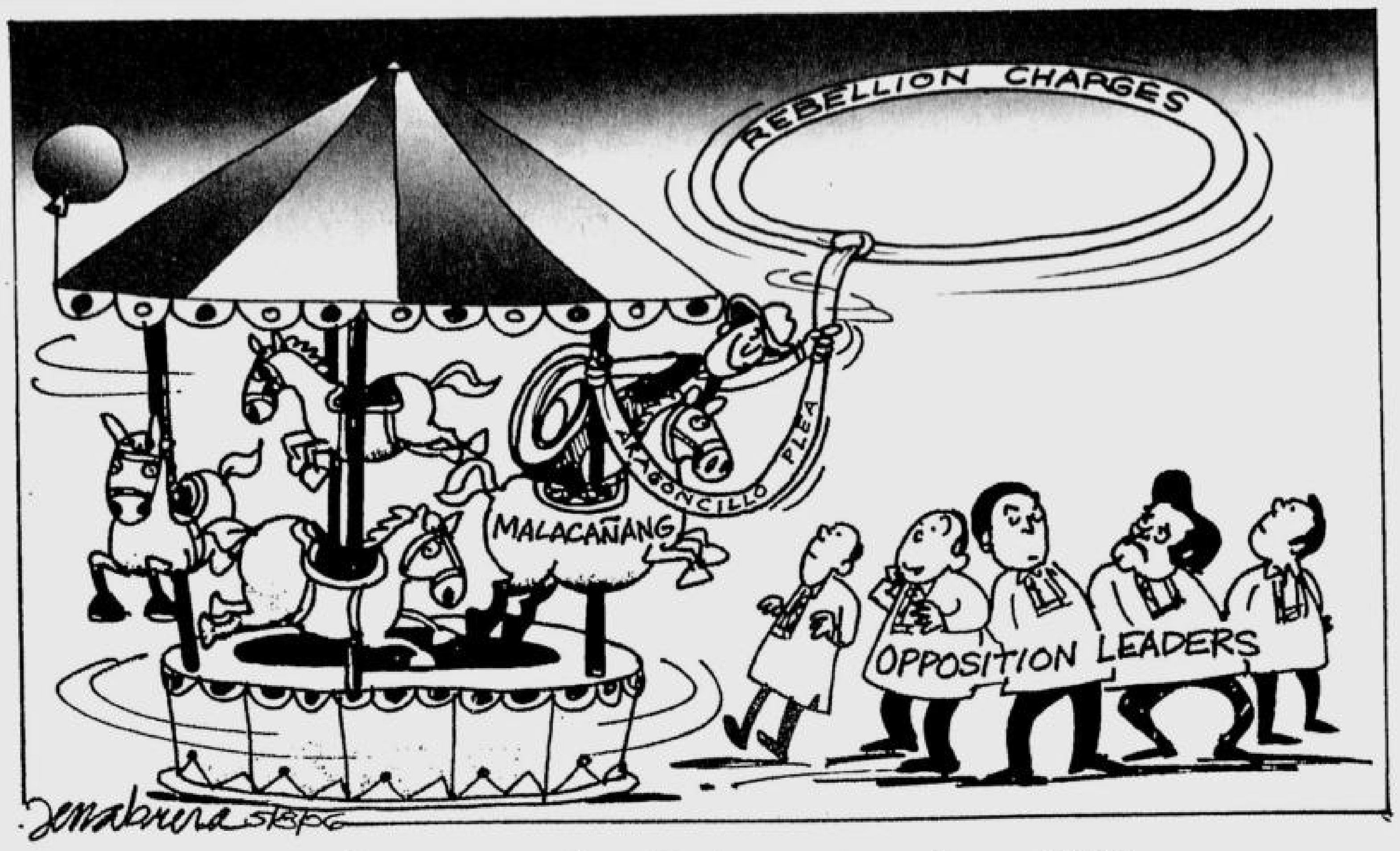

EDITORIALS

Prospect of hanging

IF ANYONE STILL DOUBTS THE SERIOUSNESS of the spying case facing Leandro Aragoncillo in the United States, consider the circumstances that led to his admission of guilt. Aragoncillo, a naturalized American citizen who served in the Marine Corps, then in the office of Vice President Al Gore and his successor Vice President Dick Cheney, and then as an intelligence analyst with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, pleaded guilty to four charges—in order to escape the death penalty.

The first of the four charges, conspiracy to transmit national defense information, is punishable by death. But in the plea bargain he entered into with US authorities, Aragoncillo is looking at 15 to 20 years in prison. (The other charges are transmitting national defense information, unlawful retention of national defense information and unlawful use of a government computer.)

According to documents filed before the US District Court in Newark, New Jersey, Aragoncillo used his access to the White House and FBI information systems to pass on classified information to a clique of anti-Arroyo politicians, including deposed President Joseph Estrada, former Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella and Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

His lawyer defended his actions as an act of patriotism: "It was his sole intention to help the people of the Philippines." But the government lawyer prosecuting the case attacked the Filipino-American's betrayal of his own oath of allegiance: Aragoncillo "took an oath to protect his country [as a Marine] and instead decided to betray his country. He took information that was very sensitive to our national security."

The spying occurred over several years, and it may have started with a visit Aragoncillo made to Malacañang in January 2001, just a few days before Estrada was ousted through People Power. It included passing on top secret data about "national defense information relating to terrorist threats to US military personnel in the Philippines."

Even though US government lawyers admit that the first charge did not result in the death of an intelligence source (the threshold violation that would have led to the electric chair), no one in the US government thinks that the spying case is any less important. Indeed, because the Bush administration is itself reeling from accusations of masterminding or at least allowing intelligence leaks for political gain, we should expect the US government to prosecute this case to the utmost.

In an almost perverse way, Aragoncillo's actions offer proof for those who have always waxed skeptical about any dual citizenship law. In their view, divided loyalties prove ultimately unpatriotic.

Prospect of lynching

POOR EDUARDO NACHURA. THE NEW SOLICItor general finds himself in the curious, perhaps ultimately untenable position of trying to stop a legal lynching. Immediately after ex-FBI analyst Leandro Aragoncillo pleaded guilty to four spying-related charges before a US court, our own secretary of justice waxed ecstatic over the possibilities. With deposed President Estrada, former Speaker Fuentebella and Senator Lacson included in the case as "unindicted co-conspirators," Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he was considering filing rebellion charges against the three politicians. Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor, never shy about seizing the political high ground, seconded the motion.

Enter Nachura. On Saturday he counseled restraint. While Aragoncillo may be guilty of acts inimical to the United States, he said, "we must determine whether it is also inimical to our own laws."

"There are perhaps different standards and different ways to look at this case," he added.

He also pointed out that Aragoncillo's admission did not mean that the other members of the alleged conspiracy were necessarily guilty. "Aragoncillo may have pleaded guilty but that does not necessarily mean that his plea of guilt will bind others implicated in the case. It all depends on what crimes they will be charged with." Or, indeed, whether an American citizen's crime of transmitting classified information necessarily means a Filipino recipient is a criminal, too.

But legal niceties have not stopped political operators like Gonzalez and Defensor from taking political advantage before. We doubt if a legal nice guy like the hapless Nachura can stop them now.

Salonga asks Palace to stop STL

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

MEDIA OUTLETS ARE FULL OF REPORTS that *jueteng* is back with a vengeance in many parts of the Philippines. This can only mean that the Small Town Lottery of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, which was designed to replace jueteng, has again failed.

STL had been tried before, during the Aquino administration, but it turned out to be a resounding failure. It did not eradicate jueteng; it, in fact, only helped jueteng to proliferate; and only the STL operators and financiers—and some government officials—made a lot of money. President Aquino stopped it as a "failed experiment."

Nevertheless, the PCSO is now experimenting with it—again, even in places that did not have jueteng before and where the people and local government, like in Quezon City, do not want STL, experimental or not. "Since jueteng is not allowed and does not exist in Quezon City," said Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, "there is no reason why STL should be allowed to operate (in Quezon City)."

But such is the shamelessness of gambling operators that a private company with a franchise to operate STL in Quezon City has the temerity to sue Belmonte, the chief of the city police and the head of the business permits division for damages. Before anybody can operate a business anywhere, he must first get a business permit from the mayor's office.

The private company said it would lose the P11 million it paid the PCSO to get an STL franchise if it would not be allowed to operate in Quezon City. Well, it should run after the PCSO if it wants to recover money or get a franchise in another place whose government and residents welcome STL.

Former Senate President Jovito Salonga, the moving spirit behind Kilosbayan and its sister organization, Bantay Katarungan, has written a letter to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita expressing his groups' opposition to STL.

During his term, President Ramos launched a Moral Recovery Program. Paradoxically, he embraced and sponsored online lotto, with the participation of a Malaysian company incorporated in the Philippines. Salonga recalled that the Malaysian company entered into a lease contract with the PCSO, which made the same pretext—the elimination of jueteng.

"Outraged by the idea that government itself would engage in gambling," Salonga recalled, "Kilosbayan went to the Supreme Court ... 1994 and won its first case in the divided court."

Now the PCSO is trying the same trick with STL. In his letter to Ermita, Salonga said STL, which will go nationwide, "is a crime against public morals, and punishable under the Revised Penal Code-Book Two, Title Six, Articles 195 and 196. The scheme, supposedly to get added revenue for the government, does not make it less condemnable since (1) it is the masses of our people who will bear the brunt of subsidizing and paying for the operation; and (2) it is the government itself—which should be the role model for all its citizens—that will be perpetuating the offense.

"It is axiomatic," he continued, "that the government, to be effective, should lead by example so it can deserve the people's trust and confidence. A government that engages in gambling, and profits by it, loses its moral authority and corrupts itself in the eyes of its own people. Our Supreme Court has consistently condemned gambling as 'a national offense,' not a mere minor transgression.

"Given the weaknesses in the Filipino character—our lack of discipline, our lack of concern for the common good, and our weak work ethic—the wise observation of the Supreme Court in the case of El Debate v. Topacio bears special relevance and should be heeded by our people, especially our high officials," Salonga continued.

"Experience has shown," said the high court, "that the common forms of gambling are comparatively innocuous when placed in contrast with the widespread pestilence of lotteries. The former are confined to a few people and places, but the latter infest the whole community, they enter every dwelling, they reach every class, they prey upon the hard-earned wages of the poor, they plunder the ignorant and simple."

"It is no accident that in places where gambling is openly encouraged by the government—whether in Nevada or in Atlantic City or in Macao, near Hong Kong—smuggling, organized crime and prostitution are rampant, idleness and laziness widespread, corruption is endemic and the economy is stagnant," Salonga said. "Gambling does not add one whit to a nation's productivity. The experience in these places teaches us one valuable lesson—gambling creates only low-wage service jobs that eventually drag the country's economy down."

Regarding the charity projects of the PCSO and other government agencies, Salonga quoted the rebuttal of the NCCP: "Charity should never become the occasion for criminality and should never be used to cover up immorality—thereby giving rise to false hopes and an attitude of dependency."

"It is our understanding," he said, "that PCSO has now been placed directly under the President. We, therefore, appeal to you (Ermita), in the long-term interest of our people, to cease and desist from carrying out this illegal and immoral scheme to run and operate the STL on a nationwide basis.

"Under Section 5 (a) of RA 6713, otherwise known as the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public officials, you and your office are 'under the obligation to act promptly on letters and requests,' such as this particular letter-request, 'with fifteen (15) days from receipt hereof,' and 'the reply must contain the action taken on the request.'"

The letter was sent April 3, 2006. On April 10, Malacañang sent a reply that "we are conducting a careful study of the issues and concerns raised in (the) letter."

3-0

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE PROBLEM IS NOT WITH THE SUPREME Court decisions, the problem is with the way Malacañang is spinning them. They've got more spin doctors per square inch there now than anywhere in the world—paid for by our taxes, of course—whose only job, done round the clock, is to give truth a lot of exercise: to stretch it to the limit, bend it out of shape and snap it like a fragile bone from overexertion.

What did they say about the Supreme Court decision scrapping EO 464? It was a triumph for them because it upheld the right of public officials not to appear in the congressional Question Hour. Who the hell cares about dragging officials to the Question Hour? The point was that the Court found iniquitous the idea of a (non-)President preventing public officials from telling the world what they knew of her cheating in the last elections. The point was that the Court upheld the right of the Senate to summon the witnesses to aid legislation—no, to make legislation possible at all—by making truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth the hallow ground for the Temple of Laws to be built on.

What did they say about the Supreme Court decision scrapping calibrated preemptive response? They said it was a triumph for them because it limited the rallies to certain public places and demanded sobriety in them. Who the hell was complaining about that? The point was that the Court found oppressive the idea of GMA herself and not the mayors, as the law demands, decreeing who may rally, where they may rally and how long they may rally. The point was that the Court found as an assault on democracy the idea that the police had a right to bludgeon the heads of demonstrators wherever they are, whenever they are and however they are, particularly with the gleefulness Vidal Querol and his un-merry men have shown.

But, of course, Malacañang will spin everything in its favor. This is a government that has added new dimensions to Orwellian Newspeak, something Querol has raised to sublime levels. Remember when he justified the manhandling of Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel as a solicitous effort by the goons who broke up their rally to prevent her from coming to harm? Fast learner, that one: He might yet get Ignacio Bunye's job.

Comes now the Supreme Court decision on 1017. If Malacañang can say the scrapping of EO 464 and CPR was a victory for them, can anyone seriously expect it not to claim so about a Court decision that upholds government's right to defend itself?

Frankly, I can't understand why anyone should be dismayed by it. It's right there in the Constitution. I've never had a problem with the idea. My first column (Feb. 27) after GMA declared 1017 began this way: "A government has the right to protect itself from a threat. But a government has no right to tyrannize the world to protect itself from that threat. GMA is not doing the first, she is doing the second. Her response to an attempt to unseat her by force is to become a dictator."

The Court clearly had the same perspective. It upheld her right to protect herself from a threat but it condemned her move to tyrannize the world to protect herself from that threat. It upheld her right to stop an attempt to unseat her by force but it condemned her bid to become a dictator using it as an excuse. The Court even called the onerous 1017 provisions a throwback to martial law. What more do you want? It is the perfect answer to a perfect idiocy.

Finding victory where there is none and gloating about it is yet another one of Malacañang's ruses to divide the ranks of its legions of enemies. Why fall into that trap? In fact, the Supreme Court has just handed GMA and cohorts a 3-0 defeat. Its rulings on 464, CPR and 1017 have pulled the legal rug out from under an attempted dictatorship. More than that, they have opened the door for the examination of the real problem, which is that GMA rigged the last elections, a door she has kept shut by preventing witnesses from witnessing, protesters from protesting and democracy from democratizing this country, or at least defending itself.

Let us praise where praise is due, and it is due Artemio Panganiban and colleagues who have continued to surprise us with a show of independence over and beyond the call of duty—maybe, the Chief Justice is eyeing a niche in history? Good for him!—and injected a country grown jaded and despairing a dose of hope. Friends have been saying enthusiastically that once the Supreme Court finds the people's initiative on Cha-cha unconstitutional as well, its rebuke would be total.

But I don't know why we have to wait for that. I don't know why we even have to wait for another impeachment bid to do something about a clear and present danger. What the three Supreme Court rulings have shown beyond a shadow of doubt is that the problem is first and last GMA. The problem is that we have a ruler who violated the Constitution by stealing the vote and by issuing EO 464, CPR and 1017; and who violates the Constitution even now by still being there. Hell, never mind the Constitution; mind who violated, is violating and will violate Common Sense. Can anything be more insulting than Charter change? What is it saying but that if GMA cannot follow the Constitution, we might as well change the Constitution?

I don't know why we have to wait for more legal remedies to remedy a bane that's ravaging the minds and bodies of our children. My solution remains snap elections to be forced by civil disobedience. Why should I be an authentic citizen to a fake President? Why should I obey ordinary laws when the (non-)President cannot obey the highest law of the land? Change the Charter? Change the Usurper.

Stop Cha-cha? Snap Gloria! The Snap there still means, "Say No to A Phony."

The 'takeover' provision

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

TO MY RECOLLECTION, THE RULING OF THE Supreme Court on Proclamation 1017 contains the first authoritative pronouncement on the meaning and scope of the "takeover" provision found in Article XII, Section 17. The provision says: "In times of national emergency, when the public interest so requires, the State may, during the emergency and under reasonable terms prescribed by it, temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest."

The question the provision poses is: By whom is this power exercised?

It will be noticed that the power to take over public utilities is made to reside in the State. However, the State, in constitutional law, is a "complexus" of four elements: people, territory, government, sovereignty.

The powers of a State are normally exercised by government. But government itself, under our system, consists of three departments: legislative, executive, judicial. Which of these branches may exercise the power?

In my "Commentary" on the 1987 Constitution, I described the background of this provision thus: "The provision, when first introduced, was a product of the 'martial law' thinking of the 1971 Constitutional Convention. In effect at the time of the approval of this provision was Letter of Instruction No. 2 of President Marcos dated 22 September 1972, instructing the secretary of national defense to take over 'the management, control and operation of the Manila Electric Company, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, the National Waterworks and Sewerage Authority, the Philippine National Railways, the Philippine Air Lines, Air Manila (and) Filipinas Orient Airways . . . for the successful prosecution by the Government of its effort to contain, solve and end the present national emergency.'

"This letter of instruction was among the executive acts which the Convention wanted ratified by Section 3(2), Article XVII of the 1973 Constitution. It was thus clear that in the mind of the Convention, the power, as granted under the 1973 Constitution, could be exercised by the executive arm of the government. And it was for the executive arm to decide whether 'national emergency' and 'public interest' demanded the temporary takeover. Moreover, unlike Section 23(2), Article VI, authorizing Congress to delegate by law emergency powers to the President, which powers cease upon the next adjournment of Congress unless sooner withdrawn by the same, Section 7 [now Section 17] put no time limit on the duration of the emergency takeover. While the takeover would be temporary, the duration of the takeover would be discretionary with the President."

Further in my "Commentary," I said: "It should also be noted that while Section 7 [now Section 17] may have been a product of 'martial law thinking,' it did not require a martial law situation for it to be operative. Temporary state takeover was justified in 'times of national emergency, when the public interest requires.' The law did not specify the type of emergency that would justify temporary State takeover. Very broad discretion was given to the President. Hence, under this provision, the scope of judicial review was even narrower than that in the now obsolete habeas corpus doctrine of Lansang v. Garcia.

"When the provision was introduced in the 1986 Constitutional Commission, 'national emergency' was explained as encompassing threat from external aggression, calamities, or natural disasters, but not strikes. The duration of the emergency is the measure of the duration of the takeover. Moreover, the phrase 'under reasonable terms prescribed by it' was added upon the instance of Commissioner Jamir. When asked, moreover, what 'it' referred to, Jamir said that it referred to the State. When pressed whether he meant Congress or the President, Jamir said: 'I suppose it will be through an appropriate agency.' Section 17 does not require, as does Article VI, Section 23(2), that the authorization be 'by law.' **The impression that is thus given is that the authorization can come from the President."**

Justice Dante Tinga referred to my view in his dissent. So did Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura.

Well, the "impression" I expressed in my "Commentary" did not impress the Supreme Court, even if the Supreme Court made no reference to it. The Supreme Court said that the President could declare a state of emergency broader than the emergency described in Article VI, Section 23, but she could not exercise emergency powers without authorization from Congress. What does this mean?

I take this to mean that when the President declares a state of emergency in a sense broader than that in Article VI, Section 23, she may aggressively exercise existing executive and regulatory powers to meet the emergency, but not the radical power of taking over the operation of privately owned public utilities. Exercising such radical power would be contrary to the more specific Article VI, Section 23(2).

I cannot say that I am unhappy about the Supreme Court decision. Section 17, after all, embodies a very dangerous power if left to the discretion of the President. President Macapagal-Arroyo may also have realized that, or may have been forewarned against it; hence she did not exercise the radical power of taking over privately owned public utilities.

What of President Marcos' exercise of that power? It should be recalled that Marcos exercised it only after he had declared martial law.

Dealing with child labor

COMMENTARY

Jigger S. Latoza
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LABOR DAY celebration last Monday was overshadowed by the Arroyo administration's usual panic in the face of its fear that the holiday would be turned into another occasion for destabilization and power grab. As it turned out, the administration was simply afraid of its own shadow.

Traditionally, Labor Day is when society at large celebrates what the Church profoundly calls the "dignity of labor." It is the time when politicians heap praises on workers and exalt the latter's contribution to the country's economy. It is likewise an occasion where the myriad problems of workers are brought into the open, with the hope that some sensible public servants would respond to those problems by going beyond rhetoric, seriously probing into these and coming up with relevant and sustainable solutions.

One problem in the labor sector that, until today, has not been addressed is child labor. In a report released two months ago by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor of the US State Department, it was noted that there were approximately 4 million child laborers in the Philippines last year. Of this alarming number, according to the Unicef and the International Labor Organization, around 2.4 million have been sweating it out in hazardous working situations, such as quarries, mines, docksides and fishing boats, and in prostitution dens. The report likewise took cognizance of the rising number of underage domestic helpers in the country.

In the provinces of Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental, the Center for Investigative Research and Multimedia Services (CIRMS) noted an increasing number of child laborers, particularly in the *haciendas*. Negros Oriental was reported to have nearly 200,000 child workers, while neighboring Negros Occidental has around 140,000. An average of 8,600 new child laborers join Negros island's workforce every year.

The various faces of child labor in the country have been vividly depicted in the video-documentary, "Minsan Lang Sila Bata" (They're A Child But Once), directed by a friend, Ditsi Carolino, for the Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs and the Archdiocese of Manila Labor Center. The documentary, in black and white, tells the stories of elementary school-age children laboring hard in a slaughterhouse, in a sugarcane plantation and at a dockside, transporting bags of cement. Anyone who had watched that film without getting affected by it could only be afflicted with the worst form of apathy.

In December 2003, the country's Anti-Child Labor Law (RA 9231) was enacted. Among others, the law aims to eradicate what are widely considered the worst forms of child labor, such as slavery (e.g., the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, serfdom, including recruitment of children for use in armed conflict), prostitution and pornography; use of children for illegal activities, including drug trafficking and any work that is hazardous and harmful to the health, safety and morals of children.

The law seems to recognize that eliminating child labor is not simply a matter of willing it. The prevalence of child labor as a social and legal issue is symptomatic of the much bigger and complex issue of poverty. In a country where independent research organizations place the poverty incidence level at more than 50 percent of the population, the phenomenon of child labor no longer surprises anyone. Indeed, the sight of child laborers, under the age of 15, has become so common in the country that people have taken it as something normal. This is quite tragic because in the ideal scheme of things, child labor should not only surprise civilized society; it should scandalize—more so, right-thinking Filipinos.

Hence, although the spirit of the law is to stamp out child labor, it actually allows children to work, provided that they do so in "non-hazardous" situations. The law stipulates that children below 15 years of age, if working in non-hazardous conditions, may work for not more that 20 hours a week. On the other hand, 15- to 17-year-old children may work but not more than 40 hours a week. Considering the nature of children, work at night is prohibited.

The problem of child labor is widespread, and a law has been enacted on it; yet, according to the same US State Department Report, as of 2005, only four persons have been convicted for violating the anti-child labor law. Here, as it is in almost all aspects of our legal system, we have the usual discrepancy in law enforcement.

While it is granted that seriously prosecuting and punishing violators of the anti-child labor law are vital steps toward the elimination of the problem, it is equally important to uproot the conditions that leave many poor families without a choice but to make children work to alleviate their miserable plight. On deeper analysis, it is grinding poverty—aggravated by ineffective, inefficient and unethical governance, in conspiracy with some socially irresponsible and profit-greedy members of the business community—that spawns child labor.

To get at the root of the problem, we might learn from other countries—such as, Bangladesh, Brazil and Mexico—which compensate poor parents for sending their children to school. Compensation is in cash or in kind—for example, a *ganta* of rice for each day the child is in school; in Mexico, the compensation comes with health services. These schemes recognize that education is one of society's most important investments in its future.

'Calabasa' gets a call

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

KAPITAN CALABASA OF BARANGAY BANSOT gets a phone call.

"Hello, Calabasha?"

"Good morning, Madam!"

"Lishen. You have made me very angry."

"Oh, no Madam! I'm sorry! But why?"

"I shent one of my frimary camfaigners, Atty. Bihon, from Shingaw ng Bayan shtraight to your barangay from Fangasinan and what did you do? You greeted her with only two bodyguardsh and not four, ash she requeshted. That ish an inshult! An inshult to her ish an inshult to me! You have wounded my fride. I do not like having my fride wounded. Or my Chu-Chu delayed at every shtation. Thish Chu-chu ish unshtofable! Shingaw ng Bayan is oferating on a shtrict timetable!"

"I am sorry, Madam! We shall greet her with a dozen bodyguards when she returns!"

"Fine. Here ish Atty. Bihon to give you inshtructionsh. Fay attention."

"Yes, Ma-"

"Hi! Calabasa? Can I tell you? Oh my God, Singaw ng Bayan is making very good progress!"

"Oh, hello, Atty. Bihon—"

"Let me tell you! Chu-Chu means more jobs! Chu-Chu means reform! Chu-Chu means change! For the better, truly!"

"Atty. Bihon, my constituency is a bit tougher to convince."

"All over the country 8 trillion million billion gazillion people say that Chu-Chu will—"

"Atty. Bihon, honestly, we both know it's not 8 trillion million—whatever..."

"Can I tell you? Fine. It's at least 8 million already! And maybe 12 million! Secretary Putok hasn't told us what we've compiled as of today."

"But they say in the last election alone, 32,269,100 Filipinos voted for a president and vice president."

"Don't mention the election! Bad!"

"But those are figures from Chairman Ayos."

"Oh. That's OK then. So what's your point?"

"Well, my constituents are asking, why is Singaw ng Bayan saying that getting 8 to 12 million signatures is a big deal? That's not even half of those who voted for a president in 2004. And in fact, 12 million is even less than the 12,905,808 votes Chairman Ayos says Madam got. Or put another way, all Singaw's proven is it has the same number that Madam claims she got in 2004."

"Can I tell you? Whoever said that is probably a destabilizer, noise-maker, from the elite or the masses, or is a rightist or leftist or is a LaSalingpusa or an Atatnista or from—"

"Um, in other words, a Filipino?"

"Can I tell you? You sound disloyal to me. Maybe I should report you again?"

No, Attorney! Sorry!"

"Can I tell you? Don't be confused by their questions! Our website says 800 Supercalifragilisticexpialidociouszilliontrillionbillionmillion hits! Per second! That's the will of the people!"

"It is?"

"Yes! Can I tell you? How can anyone question 800 Supercalifragilisticexpialidociouszilliontrillionbillionmillion hits or 12 megamillion signatures? Even if you doubt them, by the time you count them all, you're dead from old age! But so you don't worry, Calabasa, can I tell you? Here's how to destroy all opposition in 12 easy steps. Are you ready?"

"OK."

"Step 1: Never say you're wrong. Step 2: Always say they're wrong. Step 3: Say the enemy is the elite. Step 4: Say we represent the masses. Step 5: Say we want change. Step 6: Say they never want change. Step 7: Say our change is the only change. Step 8: Say we will win! Step 9: Say they will lose! Step 10: Say those who ask questions are insincere, because sincere people do what they're told! Step 11: Our critics are confusing the issues by trying to sound smart! Step 12: Whatever they say, reverse it, and say it back! Can I tell you? It works every time!"

"And every single question and argument can be solved by an item from Singaw's list?"

"Yes. Ask me anything. I will demolish it in 12 easy, Singaw steps, in one statement!"

"OK. Why should Barangay Bansot, population 100, listen to eight people who want Chu-Chu?"

"Can I tell you? Barangay Bansot is the voice of the people! And it's not eight people, it's 12, or 24, maybe 36, or 48 people! By now, it could be 84 people! They're signing so fast, we can't keep up! We are so busy with our Singaw advocacy, that we in Singaw are untroubled by Rotarians, college degree holders, nuns, priests, or worse, lawyers, students, senior citizens, questioning us because, can I tell you? All these questions? They defend only the status quo! Whereas we, Singaw ng Bayan, know that *bayan* means the country! So that's us! The country! The masses! Because the country has lots of masses who want change! So what they want, we want, too! Plus, we have faith! In Mayor Matacao! Governor Guiguisain! And above all, in Congressman Garapal who is best qualified to choose his frat brother as Frime, este, Prime Minister! And most of all, we have faith in Madam! Do we have to understand what Chu-Chu is? No! Because, Chu-Chu speaks for itself! We sincerely believe it! So our critics will lose! Because they are insincere! They only try to act smart! We will not be confused by words like 'discernment,' or 'accountability'! In fact, Singaw asks: 'Why shouldn't the 12 people in Barangay Bansot who are proposing Chu-Chu not also rule Bansot? That's the true question!"

"Wow. I'm speechless."

"Good, Calabasa. Can I tell you? I was almost ready to ask Madam to have you arrested. You take your job too seriously."

"I'm... so... sorry..."

"Shorry for what?"

"Madam! Oh! I thought it was—"

"Humph. No fork barrel for you."

***

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph/blog

Academic noise

COMMENTARY

Evelyn Mejillano, HSD

JUST RECENTLY, DIRECTOR ALICE PAÑARES OF THE National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) pointed out in an interview that there are a lot of good teachers in the public school system today, although some of them can be considered "at risk" because they do not meet the English, Math and science proficiency norms set by the Department of Education. There are about 475,000 teachers spread out in over 40,000 public schools nationwide today.

Out of 53,000 teachers who took the Self-Assessment Test for English in 2004, only 19 percent—around 10,000—passed the exam with a score of 75 percent or higher. To remedy the situation, President Macapagal-Arroyo has allocated about P500 million and directed Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo to organize and conduct refresher courses for the "at risk" teachers.

Our own experience regarding teacher quality tells us that this is a step in the right direction.

The Foundation for Worldwide People Power has been conducting its Mentoring the Mentors Program since 2002. I'm very happy to say that our work has been well received by the superintendents, supervisors, principals, teachers and master-teachers who have had the opportunity to participate in our mentoring sessions.

As of today, we have brought the Mentoring the Mentors Program to seven administrative regions, including the ARMM.

Director Pañares has in fact participated as an observer in a Mentoring the Mentors session we conducted in Batangas. We are at this point discussing with her ways to integrate the Mentoring the Mentors Program with NEAP's teacher training regimen.

What is a mentor?

New teachers often find themselves overwhelmed by the demands of a job, isolated in a classroom. They struggle to use new knowledge and skills to the ever-changing world of the classroom. This continuing challenge to their self-confidence can lead to frustration. Under these conditions, it is not unusual for a new teacher to consider giving up teaching. This dissonance can be mitigated with the presence of a mentor, who is a friend, a guide, a trusted adviser and counselor, all rolled into one.

The World Bank Philippines policy notes on "Teacher Development" validate this approach. They cite top-caliber private schools that use senior mentors and a planned in-service program.

The document goes on to say that a kind of training—one based on observation, reflection, hands-on practice, strong follow-up and feedback on practice—has been shown to be more effective than formal training.

The initial Mentoring the Mentors course runs for at least four days. Every session day is highly participatory. When the room begins to buzz with lively discussion, I know that learning is taking place. The "academic noise" that I hear is music to my educator's ears.

We have always sought to avoid conducting the take-down-notes type of seminars, where the participants scribble furiously as they desperately try to assimilate the deluge of information cascading their way.

Our course facilitators shun long lectures. As much as possible, we impose a 15-minute limit on our talks so we can devote more time to interactions with the teachers. We ask them to analyze different learning situations and relate these to their own experiences. We encourage them to use short sentences to verbalize their ideas.

In other words, these "mentors-in-training" must internalize the concepts being presented to them to the point where they can confidently share these with their students at a level that the latter can accept, process and use.

I must emphasize that both teachers and students do not learn by just sitting, listening and memorizing information in classrooms.

Sharing one's ideas and responding to reactions improve and deepen understanding.

We encourage this free exchange by breaking up our participants into pairs or very small groups. This way, learning becomes a collaborative process, not a competitive one.

There are many roads to learning. Teachers and students bring different talents and styles of learning, due to multiple intelligence. As such, educators—mentors—need to use varied active teaching and learning strategies to make learning fun. Then learning new things can come quite easily.

From this perspective, teacher-training programs like the refresher course mentioned above should avoid cognitive overload. If this happens, genuine learning most likely will not happen despite the time, effort and money spent for the training.

Above all else, the focus must be on the mastery of what is being learned rather than the quantity of facts and information being absorbed.

As the eminent educator Dr. Mel Silbermann says, "What I teach another, I master."

(You may send e-mail to the author at mentor@fwwpp.org.)

Evelyn Mejillano, HSD, is national coordinator of FWWPP's Mentoring the Mentors Program. She earned her BS and MA Education degrees from the University of the Philippines and a Doctorate in Health Science from Indiana University in the United States, where she taught graduate courses in 1988 and 1989. She has been an educator for 45 years.

THEY SAID

Oppressing employers

"[It] is true that security of tenure is a constitutionally guaranteed right of the employees; it does not, however, mean perpetual employment for (them) because our law, while affording protection to (them), does not authorize (the) oppression or destruction of an employer."

—Employers Confederation of the Philippines president Rene Soriano on a proposed bill compelling employers to make four-fifths of their total workforce regular

Holy ground

"Although the place is now considered a tourist spot, let us all avoid turning the site into just another picnic ground."

—Kamay ni Hesus Ministry Foundation's Dan Villena appealing to devotees who flock to Mt. Banahaw

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Where is Davide's 'delicadeza'?

ASIDE FROM THE LEGAL OBJECTIONS, there are other reasons for opposing the appointment of retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. as the Philippines' permanent representative to the United Nations—which appointment is violative of the Foreign Service Act (RA 7157). If President Macapagal-Arroyo will not recall Davide's appointment, the present Commission on Appointments must disapprove his confirmation, if only to show that we still follow the rule of law.

Among the other valid reasons for my objection to his appointment are the following:

1. When Davide swore in then Vice President Arroyo as President on Jan. 20, 2001, the duly elected President, Joseph Estrada, had not vacated the presidency in any of the manner provided by the Constitution. He therefore allowed Ms Arroyo to assume the presidency under highly questionable circumstances.

2. When the prosecution panel unceremoniously staged a walkout during the impeachment trial against President Estrada, Davide, as presiding officer of the impeachment court, did not do anything to reconvene the impeachment court or to convince the prosecutors and the opposition senators to continue with the proceedings. He thus allowed the untimely adjournment of the impeachment trial and failed in his duty as presiding officer of the impeachment court. The failure of the impeachment court to function smoothly led to the political and economic instability that bedevils our country up to the present.

(For these reasons, out of *delicadeza*, Davide should have refused the appointment.)

3. Of the 84 million Filipinos today, I believe there are other legal luminaries, diplomats and professionals who can competently serve as our country's permanent delegate to the United Nations.

—RICARDO TILLO JR.,
San Diego Compound, Cavite City

Artistic cruelty to animals like a live 'Guyito'

YES, INDEED, I HAVE A COMPLAINT about live carabaos being painted, even if the painting is part of the celebration of Labor Day in Vigan City. Wasn't this the subject of a photo and a news story that appeared in the Inquirer's May 3 issue?

I am glad I was not there to paint on real carabaos, as suggested by Frank Cimatu of the Inquirer's Northern Luzon Bureau, for I find the activity an act of disrespect for our national animal.

I cannot see the logic of using the beautiful ebony hunk of an animal as a painter's or artist's "canvas." Such use is simply inappropriate, if not degrading—beneath the dignity of man's beast of burden, a farmer's friend, strong, hardworking, uncomplaining, patient, silent, etc. and obedient only to his master's voice.

However, paragraph 3 of the news item was gratifying to note, if not heartwarming and tender.

Of course, the painting of Guyito was probably an exception. For one, the artworks were done on inanimate plastic carabaos. And they were done by famous and emerging Filipino artists to boot.

A painted Guyito is certainly acceptable. But painting on live carabaos is going too far; it is downright cruelty to animals.

—TEODORICO P. CUMGUN JR.,
artist, 005 Calamias,
Lipa City 4217

Home is still De Quiros' RP

FOR SOMEONE WHO NOW HAS lived far away from "home" for a decade, Conrado de Quiros' April 18 column ("10 things to love about being in the Philippines") was another treat.

His memories are my memories, too. From the age of 4 till 12, I commuted from Project 4 to PNC on JD and DM buses. At that time, it took an hour or so, I guess. De Quiros' memories precede mine by a good decade. But I would just like to thank him for recalling them—as well as the nine items in his list—in his column. Like him, I also find Boracay night life one of the Philippines' "pluses."

After living all these years in Holland, home is still the Philippines. And I think, the millions of Filipinos out of their original country nest feel the same as I do.

This is why the Inquirer is such an indispensable link to our roots, to our memories, to everything familiar and loved. Once again, I thank the Inquirer.

—ANNETTE PELKMANS,
euroscope@hetnet.nl

DAR appalled by Unorka accusation

WE, IN THE DEPARTMENT OF Agrarian Reform (DAR), extend our sincere condolences to the family of Enrico Cabanit, the secretary general of the Ugnayan ng Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (Unorka), even as we condemn in the strongest possible terms the spate of killings of peasant leaders in various parts of the country.

The brutal murder of Cabanit is something that is totally unacceptable and has no place in a civilized society. His untimely demise is surely a big loss to the cause of agrarian reform. Cabanit was known for his courageous stand for the landless farmers. We, therefore, sympathize with his bereaved family; but we are appalled by the statement issued by Unorka National Council member Evangeline Mendoza, holding the DAR accountable "for his death." (PDI, 4/26/06)

The mere fact that high-level officials, led by Undersecretary Narciso B. Nieto, were there to preside in a dialogue with Unorka before Cabanit was gunned down showed that the department is steadfast in resolving all agrarian disputes, including the controversial Worldwide Development Corp. (Wadecor) landholdings, covering some 1,023 hectares in Davao del Norte.

For the record, 485.64 hectares, or nearly half of Wadecor landholdings, had already been distributed to the Wadecor Employees Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multi-Purpose Cooperative (Wearbempco).

A new survey is also being conducted by the DAR on the 386 hectares previously exempted by former Agrarian Secretary Ernesto Garilao from CARP coverage. This is to determine whether it has remained as a livestock farm, which was the basis for its exemption, or has been converted into a citrus farm.

The remaining landholdings—the bulk of which is considered grazing areas, while others are being used for office buildings, airstrip and industrial plans—had been exempted from CARP coverage.

As a matter of policy, the department scrutinizes every detail of the case before coming up with a decision. This is to avoid injustice that may arise from hasty evaluation.

—JIM G. COLETO,
head executive assistant,
Department of Agrarian Reform,
Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC

A plebiscite without involving gov't

I AM A CITIZEN OF THE REPUBlic fed up with all the lies and duplicity of our politicians and public officials, administration and opposition alike. Maybe, it's time we asked the people themselves what they think.

May I propose the submission of some issues of national concern to a plebiscite, just as Conrado de Quiros proposed in his column. For this, I propose five questions, answerable by "Yes" or "No." for this plebiscite: (1) Do you believe Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo won fair and square in 2004? (2) Do you want GMA to stay as President until 2010? (3) Do you consider the Hello Garci issue closed? (4) Do you know what exactly will be changed in the Constitution? (5) Do you want your congressmen/senators to continue having their pork barrel?

Inasmuch as GMA is most probably not inclined to support a plebiscite that carries these questions, I suggest we ourselves, the people, initiate this one without involving government. This way, we do not have to rely on a Comelec that can't count. Neither will we need an enabling law from a Congress that does not reflect, much less work for, the people's aspirations and interests. Then the only court we need is the court of public opinion.

How will people vote in this plebiscite? They can express their vote through a specific color agreed upon to represent either "Yes" or "No." Let's set a date. Make it a Sunday so that more people will be free, and there will be no need to declare a holiday. On the designated day, those who care enough to vote can go to the nearest mall, church, town plaza, or other places where people gather, wearing the color representing their vote. If one doesn't want others to know how he intends to vote, he can wear to these places a different color over his "voting" color, which he can reveal at the designated time of voting.

For those stuck at home for whatever reason, they can hang a piece of cloth outside their windows, doors, gates or fences. For those in a vehicle, they can wave their color to indicate their vote at the designated time, or tie it to the antenna. This manner of voting can be adopted nationwide.

For overseas Filipinos, they can send e-mail containing just one word—the color of choice—to the editor of the newspaper of their choice. At a designated time, say 3 p.m., everybody "votes" or "reveals their true colors."

Show the nation your answer to the questions in the plebiscite by wearing a particular color identified with your vote, by spreading word about the color of your vote, through text, word of mouth, the Internet or whatever. The only limit to the ways of getting the vote across is one's imagination.

We, the ordinary citizens, may not have the resources to undertake a massive information campaign to promote this real people's initiative, but if enough men and women of goodwill participate in this undertaking, we may yet see our questions answered and our voices heard.

—TRENNIE MONSOD,
trenniemonsod@yahoo.com

Are we to blame for migrating?

I READ THE YOUNGBLOOD article written by Czarinah Pagay ("The doctor is out," PDI, 4/29/06), and I was so touched by—and felt so helpless about—the state of the medical profession in the Philippines. I have friends and classmates—doctors—who chose to work as nurses. But who can blame them? I am probably one of the lucky ones for I did not have to make such a sacrifice.

I am almost done with my subspecialty training here in the United States and I am looking forward to move to another state to work as a physician. I once dreamed of going back to our country, to serve my own people, to treat the many helpless Mang Pandoys. And believe me, many of us here feel the same way. But we often end up asking the question: "What is in store for us in our own country?" And oftentimes, we are scared to face the truth—there is nothing for us there anymore.

Many of us will soon finish our training here, but we are choosing to stay. But who can blame us for not going back?

—JENNIFER C MANEJA, M.D.,
jcmaneja99@yahoo.com

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CAN WE EVER ROOT OUT CORRUPTION?

By Francisco S. Tatad

This piece was adapted, with the author's permission, from a speech at the 2006 International Solidarity Forum on John Paul II's contribution to modern social thought at United Nations Headquarters, Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium, New York on March 27, 2006. The forum was hosted by World Youth Alliance, a global community of young people working with the UN, European Union and other international organs to raise human dignity and development around the world. The author was elected to the WYA international board during the conference. Thereafter he was invited to sit on the Executive Board.

Introduction

POLITICAL corruption appears to be rising everywhere, not least among the world's democracies. What can they do which they have not done until now? This we shall see.

Democracy, in its various stages and forms, has a history of at least 2,500 years. The present model arrived in the last century, when monarchy, aristocracy and oligarchy finally lost out to popular rule, when fascism and nazism were buried in the ashes of war, when Soviet communism finally collapsed—with no small help from Pope John Paul II—under the unbearable weight of its false doctrine about man, and military dictatorships and one-party regimes fell into general disrepute from sheer corruption, incompetence and often-violent and cruel misuse of political power.

A common disease

The democracy we have today no more resembles the Athenian polity or the Roman republic than an electro-magnetic train resembles a horse-drawn carriage. Yet many of the 65 or so so-called democracies have so little in common with the desired model; they sometimes look more like its antithesis or caricature. In varying degrees, all suffer from political corruption.

Political corruption defined

Transparency International defines political corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power by political leaders for private gain." John Paul II's reference to it in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) provides a good starting point for our discussion. To him, political corruption constitutes democracy's most serious deformity because of its effect on morality, social justice, institution-building, and decision-making.

The real cost

The financial cost is never small. But infinitely larger is the cost to public institutions, to public morale and self-esteem, to the rule of law, and in the hardest of cases, to the rule of reason. Year after year, the Berlin-based NGO comes out with its Corruption Perception Index. This gets far more publicity than the annual roll call of America's richest billionaires. But whether or not those listed among the most corrupt do mind being so named, they have not shown it by shedding off old skin. Not only does the corruption persist; in certain cases, it takes on the increased ferocity and magnitude of plunder.

$1 trillion in bribes

According to World Bank Institute, quoting its own studies, more than $1 trillion is paid in bribes each year, not counting embezzled public funds and stolen public assets. The figure is staggering, but those who have seen the corruption in some Third World countries may yet wonder if the estimate could not, in fact, be much bigger.

Whatever the reality, the situation in developing countries and countries in transition always looks worse than that in developed ones. In countries where politics appears to be the only growth industry, the highest officials are often the richest while the people are the poorest, whatever their legal income.

How some states fight it

Nearly everywhere, top business executives are better paid than top government officials. That has not been helpful. To avoid corruption, Singapore pays its top officials the same amount of money that corporate executives of comparable qualifications earn, running a corporation or a successful professional practice. And Singaporeans tell us, this policy has paid off – in terms of honest and competent service, without any odor of wrongdoing.

The hardest hit

Interested parties are always the first to suffer in any corrupt official transaction. . But in the end it is always the people that gets hit the hardest. The situation gets particularly malignant when those in power get out of control. In one Asian country, for instance, money for everything is routinely re-channeled to in-season and out-of-season politicking. Corruption leaves little or nothing for development, not even for a reasonable response to the highly publicized threat posed by foreign-exported terrorism. Were such threat to materialize, the nation would be at the mercy of an air force that cannot fly, a navy that cannot navigate, an army that cannot move, communicate or shoot, and a police that cannot even go after motorized criminals.

Raping the budget

In the same country, the Constitution mandates Congress to enact a budget each year – called the General Appropriation Act -- to support government operations. Whenever Congress fails to do so, and loses its reason for being, the expired budget is made to run again until the new one, if ever, is enacted. Each time this is done, everything on the old budget gets a second life of its own, including those programs and projects that had already been paid for. As nobody is foolish enough to pay for any completed project twice, the reenacted amount thus becomes gravy for those in power.

Beyond common theft

Where corruption begins at the top, the logical consequence is the corruption of all the other layers and branches of government. Members of Congress are corrupted through a distorted pork barrel system, which allows them to pocket a large part of the cost of all projects. The judiciary, with its own weaknesses, is corrupted through the appointment system, which the President exercises without any concession to meritocracy nor fear of the consequences of cronyism or favoritism. Because those in power try to keep power at all costs, the electoral process and the general system of accountability, including impeachment of impeachable officers, are perverted, and the theft of public office becomes a larger crime than the usual theft in public office.

Worse than Belarus

Today, Belarus is pictured as one country where someone not validly elected has taken over the government. This has provoked the strongest reaction from the United States. Yet, in another region there is at least this other country where the same situation has existed these last five years, without provoking the same concern from any member of G-7. This does not merely pose a danger to democracy; it destroys the very essence thereof. There must then be a common standard in judging the legitimacy and fitness of corrupt political leaders everywhere. There cannot be one rule for some and another for others.

What is to be done?

The problem is not only local or national, but global. Political corruption is now a transnational crime. It must be adequately addressed by putting in the necessary safeguards and deterrents. These include: cohesive political institutions with open decision-making; a highly professionalized bureaucracy committed to ignore and resist extralegal pressures or influence from any source; civic organizations with strong institutional links to relevant multilateral organizations; a social environment in which the press, the academe, the professions and civil society itself are committed to speaking the truth at all times; a morally upright leadership that will always do what is right, regardless of the consequence; a strong sense of the rule of law; and what John Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice*, calls "a public conception of justice."

> **"Because those in power try to keep power at all costs, the electoral process and the general system of accountability, including impeachment of impeachable officers, are perverted, and the theft of public office becomes a larger crime than the usual theft in public office."**

The U.N. Formula

Governments and multilateral institutions will have to work together to pursue an agreed program. For this purpose, it is absolutely necessary that the United Nations Convention against Corruption, signed in Merida, Mexico in December 2003 as the culmination of various regional efforts in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas to forge a common document, become the basic charter of global cooperation in fighting corruption. The looting of poor countries must stop; corrupt politicians' secret bank accounts abroad must be unlocked, the monies repatriated to benefit the people who are their real owners.

The real fight

But this is just the beginning. So much needs to be done. We must realize that the fight is moral, not simply political. It is a struggle for the virtuous life, not simply for the most enjoyable one. At the center of it, is, and must be, the human person--- man and woman. We cannot completely reject the corruption of our politics unless we first reject the corruption of the truth about ourselves. Political corruption corrupts our politics, but corruption of the truth about the human person corrupts the whole person, and his relationship with everybody else, including his Creator. We must insist on that truth, for without it, there can be no peace, justice, or freedom. And no democracy either.

Democracy plus

"We need to ask ourselves," says John Paul in *Memory and Identity*, "what a democracy ought to be." "We cannot," says the great Pope in *Evangelium Vitae*, "idolize democracy to the point of making it a substitute for morality or a panacea for immorality. Fundamentally democracy is a 'system' and as such is a means and not an end. Its 'moral' value is not automatic, but depends on conformity to moral law.." We cannot have a democracy in which political correctness censors or suppresses or shames out of existence that which is morally right and good and beautiful. Nor can we have it said that the purely materialistic society which atheistic materialism had failed to achieve has now become democracy's final triumph.

> **"Political corruption corrupts our politics, but corruption of the truth about the human person corrupts the whole person, and his relationship with everybody else, including his Creator. We must insist on that truth, for without it, there can be no peace, justice, or freedom. And no democracy either."**

A moral construct

Democracy is not merely a political construct. How men are to order their lives together is not a gift from the first philosophers or the last Congress; it is a gift that came down to us from the hand of God on Mount Sinai. It was the fruit of Yahweh's covenant with his people Israel. At Golgotha, the covenant was transformed into communion when the man who said he was the Son of God proved it by forgiving the sins of men, by dying and rising again, in fulfillment of the Scriptures. It was not Christ entering into human history; it was human history entering into Christ. Christ thus became "the norm of history," as Hans Urs von Balthazar puts it; we cannot, says John Paul, separate human history from Christ.

We must then live our lives in the full knowledge that our human journey begins and ends in God; and that our participation in civil government, passive or active, is nothing but a participation in the Divine governance of the universe. Man's vocation is eschatological, says John Paul, even though it leaves its mark upon the history of nations.

The American experience

Upon the founding of America, the Founding Fathers spoke of "self-evident truths." No one had to tell them what these were. They knew that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Thus Alexis de Tocqueville could speak of religion as America's first political institution, and a contemporary commentator could talk of the "sacred canopy" under which America was built.

Much of this has blurred in the minds of many in our time. Freedom is now invoked by some to deny the very truth ---the only truth--- that makes men free. But freedom, says the cardinal-theologian who would become Pope Benedict XVI, in his book *Truth and Tolerance*, "is not an ever-loosening of norms and constant expression of individual freedoms in the direction of total liberation from all order. Freedom must relate to the truth, to what we actually are, and correspond to this nature of ours...Liberation consists not in gradually getting rid of law and of norms of behavior, but in purifying ourselves and purifying those norms, so that they make possible that coexistence of freedoms which is appropriate to man."

Europe's mistake

Not too long ago, Europe and Christianity were deemed interchangeable terms. *'Christenheit oder Europa'*—the German poet could sing then. Today, no more than a few could seem to remember that the European heritage is preeminently Christian, that it was in a European sky that Constantine the Great saw the cross with the sign ***in hoc signo vinces***, before he humbled the stronger Maxentius in the battle of Ponte de Milvio in the year 312, and that it was from Europe that the same cross of Christianity traveled across the seas to distant parts of the globe, including the Philippines. The deletion of Christianity from history means the deletion of God from human memory, and this, as C. S. Lewis warned, means the 'abolition of man.'

Agnosticism or amnesia?

Some have called this rejection of the Lord of our history not apostasy but mere agnosticism. I wonder. Is it not rather amnesia, although perhaps a self-willed one? God gave us memory so we might smell roses even in the dead of winter, but somehow many seem to have trouble remembering where little Johnny came from. And they seem to regard this loss of memory the triumph of wisdom.

A timely reminder

One is reminded of an old story by Anatole France. In that story a great and noble King wanted to know the wisdom of the ages before he dies. He sends out his scholars to kingdoms far and wide, and they return after many years, laden with volumes upon volumes of learned text. Yet on seeing these, the King says no, it's not another library he needs, but a page, a line, or maybe a word that sums up the wisdom of the ages. The scholars depart anew, and return only when the King is about to die. They hand him a small piece of paper. His eyes brighten up as he reads, and then he expires. On the paper the scholars have written: *Man is born, suffers and dies.*

The great and noble King died savoring a lie.

The truth is much brighter than that ---perhaps brighter than the light of the sun. Christ himself told us: Man is born, suffers and dies, but he is born unto eternal life. The first Thomas doubted and then believed. The other Thomas sings it with boundless faith in his hymn to the Eucharist: *Credo quid dixit Dei Filius: Nil hoc verbo Veritatis verius*—Nothing is more certain: the Son of God has told me so: What Truth has uttered, I believe and know."

The need for a new man

Our present situation, says Romano Guardini in *The End of the Modern World*, first published in English in 1956, twelve years before he died, requires not the single great genius, but a whole new human structure. We need a new man –and woman, one must assume. It took a particular type of man, one who was both creator and product of the Middle Ages, says Guardini, to tame the chaos of the great migrations that lasted some five hundred years. After him came the man who unleashed the monstrous masses of power that threaten us even today. Our present hope, says Guardini, is that a new man would come who would put the true meaning of human life above the swirling currents of our time.

Twenty-five years ago, the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, in his slim volume *After Virtue* wrote: "What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us." He believed that if the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we should be able to survive the next wave. He reminded us, however, that while the barbarians used to lie beyond the frontiers, they had since been governing us, without our being fully aware of it. "We are not waiting for a Godot," he said, "but for another – doubtless very different—St. Benedict."

Conclusion

Indeed, a new Benedict has come to guide the Church of Christ through a new dark age threatened by what this Pope himself has called the dictatorship of ethical relativism. He could well be the new man Guardini was talking about. But whether or not it is so, the world will need, more than ever, the moral imagination of the young to lift humanity from the deepening pessimism of a resurgent pre-Christian Zeitgeist. There can be no doubt whatsoever that those who are working to raise the level of human dignity and human development everywhere, and all those who have been touched by their mission and message will lead the way to see the final triumph of truth and freedom.

Founded in 1999 by Canadian-American Ana Halpine, its present president, WYA is based in New York, 228 East 71st Street. Its governing board of seven is chaired by Ann Seabright of Ohio, and its international board includes Countess Consuelo Ballestrem and the Dowager Marchioness Lady Salisbury for Europe, Kathryn Hoomkwap for Africa, Miguel Guevara for Latin America, and former Senator Francisco Tatad for Asia. Its patrons include Prince Nikolaus and Princess Margaretta of Leichtenstein, the Lord Brennan, Renato Cardinal Martino of the Holy See and Christoph Cardinal Schonborn of Vienna. Mary Ann Glendon, Archbishop Charles Chaput, Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, and George Weigel lead the advisory board. The 2006 forum was attended by UN diplomats and youth delegates from the five continents, and heard Slovenia's former prime minister Alojz Peterle, John Paul's biographer George Weigel, European Parliament Member Prof. Wojciech Roszkowski, Kenya's Ambassador Judith Mbula Bahemuka,, Prof. Habib Malik of Lebanon, Rabbi David Novak of the U.S., and Kathryn Hoomkwap of Nigeria.

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Top DPWH exec exposes ₱153-M financial scam

By Rolando O. Borrinaga
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—THE TOP OFFICIAL OF THE Department of Public Works and Highways here took it upon himself to expose a financial scam right in his own turf.

Engineer Jaime Pacanan, DPWH director for Eastern Visayas, exposed anomalous transactions involving P153 million worth of government funds in 2003 and 2004 at the Tacloban Sub-District Engineer's Office of the DPWH.

He said in a news conference on Saturday that three DPWH officials were involved in the anomaly that included forgery of signatures, falsification of public documents, and double or triple payments for the same scope of several public works projects in Tacloban.

Pacanan, however, declined to identify the three pending the decision of DPWH central office. But he said two had since retired from the service. The third had been declared absent without leave (Awol).

Pacanan said his investigation team collated 18 sets of documents that contained the questionable transactions. The amount involved totaled P152,772,521.

"I would like to show the country that the DPWH has a good image left behind its present dubious reputation," Pacanan said, when asked about the motive of his revelation.

"I'm willing to pay the price," he added, in response to the warning about the risks he faced for his exposé.

Pacanan was tipped about the anomaly in September last year by the regional director of the Department of Budget and Management, who told him about double or triple payments for the same projects administered by the Tacloban sub-district office.

Pacanan requested an investigation of the scam by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) of the DPWH national office.

At the same time, he formed a regional investigation team to produce a parallel report to complement the IAS report, which was not shown to him.

The local team appended to their document the Commission on Audit report on the issue.

He also asked the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the issue.

In Legazpi City, DPWH regional office director Orlando Roces chose to keep quiet after creating an uproar for alluding to an alleged list of media personalities receiving regular allowances from his office.

Local journalists have dared Roces to reveal the names of media persons allegedly receiving "payola" from his office.

Roces mentioned the alleged list of media personalities in the DPWH *payola* to broadcaster Tom Jarilla of RGMA when the latter recently solicited assistance for the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP) Albay Chapter Summer Sportsfest.

The list reportedly included some 50 journalists, majority of whom are from Camarines Sur, who are in the DPWH Bicol payroll.

Irate mediamen have demanded from Roces to name names to vindicate those who are not involved.

The director, however, refused to make further comments on the issue. *With a report from Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Road project engineer angers Leyte mayor

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

SILAGO, SOUTHERN LEYTE—THE MAYOR of this town blew his top when a government engineer overseeing a multimillion-peso road project tried to protect the contractor who tried to pour cement over an ill-prepared sub-base.

Mayor Martin Tomol lost his cool during the Provincial Development Council meeting on Wednesday in Maasin City when engineer Benedicto Rivera defended the contractors.

"I would have boxed you had nobody been around," the mayor told Rivera in the presence of Gov. Rosette Lerias, engineers from the Department of Public Works and Highways, Philippine Japan Highway Lane (PJHL), Katahira Consulting Firm and China Road Contractors.

Lerias suspended the meeting and initiated a dialogue in Silago the next day to resolve the matter.

But Ricardo Pacanan, DPWH director for Eastern Visayas, ordered the Southern Leyte engineering district to look into the mayor's complaint.

China Road Contractors has been awarded the contract, worth over P100 million, to concretize the 23-km road in St. Bernard, San Juan, Anahawan, Hinundayan, Hinunangan and Silago.

During the PDC meeting, Tomol reported that he saw the contractors trying to pour the cement although the sub-base was badly prepared.

Rivera, DPWH materials engineer assigned to the road project, said the sub-base of flattened soil was usually sprinkled with water before the cement was poured.

Quezon solon slams Tagaytay 5 'torture'

LUCENA CITY—QUEZON REP. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III has condemned the alleged torture that was experienced by the five men from Tagaytay who were earlier arrested on suspicion of being New People's Army (NPA) members.

"If there is truth to the statements of the Tagaytay 5, I condemn such deplorable acts by the arresting unit or custodial officers and they should be charged for violation of our laws and the Constitution," Tañada said in an interview here yesterday.

He stressed that torture had no room in society.

"As a matter of fact, our Constitution declares that the use of torture is illegal," Tañada said.

Former Sen. Wigberto Tañada has also expressed grave concern over the illegal detention of Aris Sarmiento, one of the arrested suspects.

"Aris was a member of my staff when I became congressman of the fourth district of Quezon. He helped me organize peasants and fisherfolk so that they could be empowered and stand for themselves. He resigned sometime in 1998 but he remains a friend," he said in an earlier statement.

Congressman Tañada vouched for the legitimacy of the peasant organization, the Kalipunan ng mga Magbubukid sa Kabite, that the suspects claimed they belong to.

Earlier, Cavite Rep. Jesus Crispin Remulla had also attested to the legitimacy of the farmers' organization.

Tañada said Sarmiento had been serving as research consultant for the peasant group.

"I have always admired Aris' dedication and persistence in working for and with the masses. For him to be accused of plotting something sinister to harm ordinary folk is totally out of his character, the lawmaker added.

The Tañadas called for the immediate release of Sarmiento, saying they strongly believed that the charges against him were without merit.

The five were arrested by police and Navy intelligence agents on April 28.

They were presented to media as NPA members who had planned to sabotage the Labor Day celebration.

Sarmiento, Michael Masayes, Axel Alejandro Pinpin, Rico Ybañez and Riel Custodio accused their captors and custodian of torturing them during interrogation. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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On 8 May 2006, on the annual *World Red Cross Red Crescent Day*, the ICRC delegation to the Philippines would like to pay tribute to the vital contribution of the two million members and volunteers of the PNRC who are actively committed to addressing challenging humanitarian issues affecting their communities.

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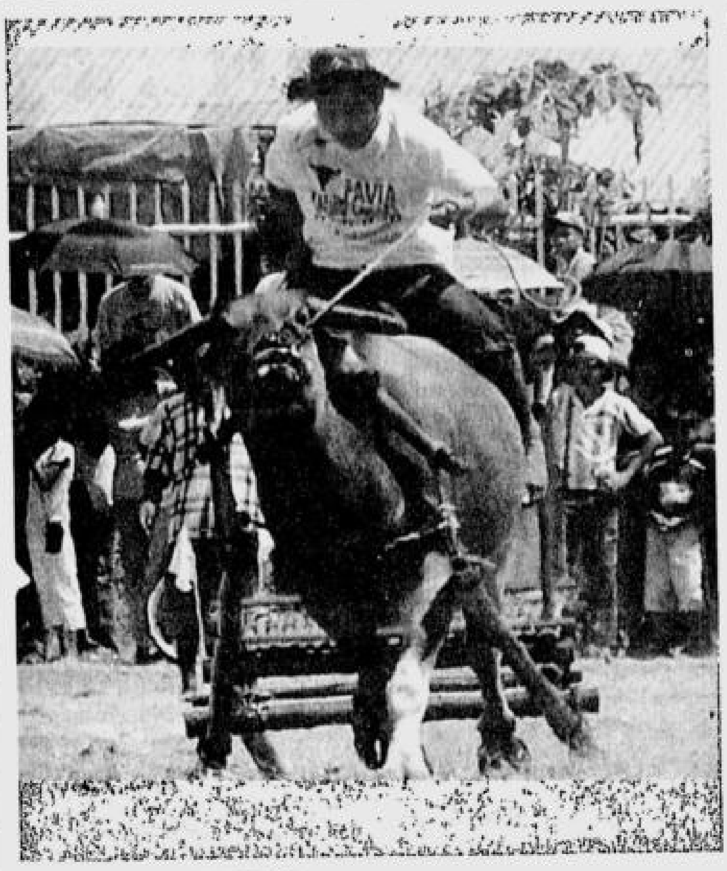

BEAST OF BURDEN ARNOLD ALMACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

The carabao gets no break as a beast of burden during the Carabao-Carroza Parade and Race at the 33rd Carabao-Carroza Festival in Pavia, Iloilo.

Agta folk flee from AFP operations

LUCENA CITY—HUNDREDS OF AGTA FAMILies from the Sierra Madre continue to suffer in different evacuation sites in General Nakar and Infanta towns in northern Quezon due to the military's counterinsurgency operations.

"Most of our children are now getting sick from the sudden change of climate. They are used to cold weather in the mountain and not to the humid air in the lowland," said Nap Buendicho, president of Agta (Adhikain ng mga Grupong Taong Katutubo na Nagtatanggol sa Lupaing Ninuno) tribe, in a phone interview on May 5 from the Tribal Center for Development building in Infanta, one of the shelters for the refugees.

He pleaded for a stop to the military operations "and leave us in peace."

The tribal leader said the Catholic Prelature of Infanta had been helping his people survive in their temporary shelters, providing them with medicines, food and clothing.

"But we don't know when this ordeal would end. We are not used to this kind of life," he lamented.

Buendicho said the military had been suspecting that Agta settlements were serving as sanctuaries for communist rebels, especially during military operations.

"We're not partisans to any armed groups. We're just simple mountain folk, living in peace and harmony in the Sierra Madre until the fighting began," he said.

He said the Agta mountain settlers were occupying temporary shelters in Barangay Katablingan near the General Nakar town proper. He said some of his fellow tribesmen had decided to resettle on Polilio Island.

A Catholic priest advocating for the rights and protection of Agta natives assailed the military for alleged malice and deception in the conduct of its propaganda war against the communist rebels in the Sierra Madre.

Fr. Pete Montallana, coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples' Apostolate in the Prelature of Infanta and TCD director, said he led a delegation of Agta natives that attended the assembly of mountain villagers in Barangay Magsikap, General Nakar on April 29.

He said more than 100 assembly participants were surprised when soldiers led by a certain Lieutenant Mangalos handed ready-made placards that contained anticommunist and antileftist slogans for a picture-taking session.

The villagers became unwitting pawns in the government's anti-insurgency propaganda campaign, he said.

Montallana said not one of the participants in the tension-filled gathering had the courage to question the conduct of the Army soldiers, fearful of being suspected as antigovernment and pro-communist.

"They were afraid of the consequences once they protest holding the placards handed to them by the Army soldiers," the priest said over the phone.

He said they were made to believe that it was the village officials of Magsikap who called the assembly. But it turned out that what was discussed during the meeting was the agenda prepared by the military, Montallana said.

Maj. Jose Broso, spokesperson of the military's Southern Luzon Command, denied the allegations.

"Handling placards was not compulsory. It was usually held as the culminating part of the assembly as a manifestation of unity against a common enemy," Broso explained. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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1 killed, 6 hurt in misencounter

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—AN ELDERLY WOMAN WAS killed and five others, including two children, were wounded after soldiers fired on a barangay leader and some residents whom they mistook as communist rebels in San Remigio town in Antique early Saturday.

Capt. Renante Besa, spokesperson of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, identified the lone fatality as Epifania Cabaya, 65. Wounded were Cabaya's husband, Federico, 72; and other members of their family—Abelardo, 64, Joylen, 11, and Justin, 9.

The victims are residents of Barangay Panpanan I in San Remigio, 21 km northeast of the capital town of San Jose. The hinterland village straddles the boundary of Antique and Iloilo provinces.

A civilian guide of the soldiers was also wounded, but Besa withheld his identity for security reasons.

Besa described the incident as an "encounter between armed civilians" and troops of the 31st Reconnaissance Company under Task Force Panay (TFP), which is in-charge of internal security operations on Panay Island.

He said 18 soldiers were patrolling the area to check on reports of the presence of armed men when they allegedly encountered a group of armed residents led by their barangay chair, Julie Cabusbusan.

The two groups allegedly fired at each other at around 5:30 a.m., thinking that they were up against New People's Army (NPA) rebels.

"The [rebels] always pass by the village so both the soldiers and residents thought they were firing at the rebels," Besa told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

He said the Army troops recovered a Carbine rifle and a homemade shotgun at the battle scene.

The civilian victims were "caught in the crossfire," Besa said.

Maj. Gen. Alphonsus Crucero, 3rd Infantry Division commander, ordered the TFP to conduct a thorough investigation of the incident to determine if lapses were committed by the soldiers.

Police authorities are conducting a separate probe of the incident, said Supt. Ronilo Quebrar, provincial police director.

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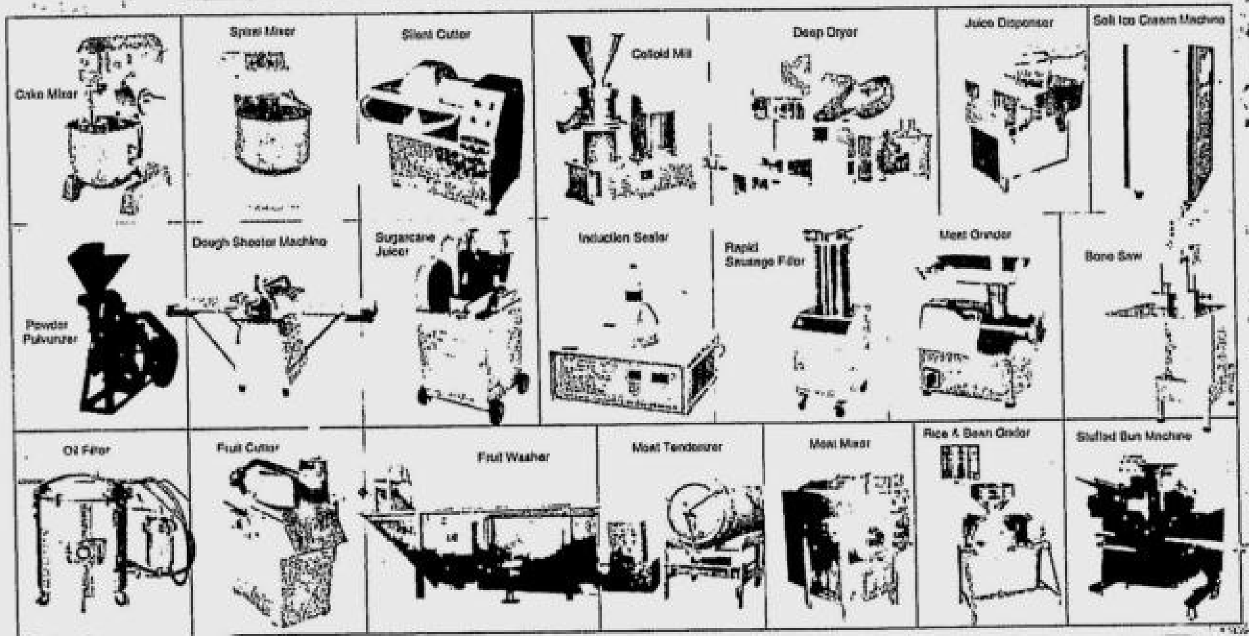

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DEALERS ARE WELCOME

Owners of sunken ship can't hide behind law–SC

BAGUIO CITY—OWNERS OF the ill-fated MV P. Aboitiz, which sank in 1980 while on its way to Manila from Hong Kong, must now pay back one of the firms that insured the cargoes it lost at sea 26 years ago, the Supreme Court ruled on Tuesday.

The court's third division said Aboitiz Shipping Corp. could no longer hide behind a principle in internationally recognized maritime law that it can limit the full amount of its liability only to the value of the vessel it lost in a major accident.

Aboitiz has been facing over 100 indemnification claims mostly from insurers over cargoes it lost when the P. Aboitiz sank on Oct. 31, 1980. The lost cargoes ranged from Renault motor vehicle spare parts worth P284,218 to glass tubes worth P29,719.88.

The Supreme Court affirmed the Aug. 29, 2002 and Jan. 23, 2003 rulings of the Court of Appeals that Aboitiz was still liable for the full value of textiles and chemicals shipped by Societe Francaise Des Colloides and insured by New India Assurance Co. upon its shipment to Manila. This amounts to P142,401.60.

The vessel's owners said the P. Aboitiz sank due to bad weather, but the high court and the CA concluded in previous rulings that it sank because of its poor condition.

In recent manifestations, Aboitiz contested court decisions mandating payment of the cargoes' full value because of the maritime law's limited liability doctrine. This doctrine protects ship owners from legal suits on the theory that they cannot be held accountable for a ship beyond their control or supervision, once it embarks fully equipped and manned by a full crew.

Aboitiz claimed that the damage claims already exceed the value of P. Aboitiz. It had been justifying this assertion with a ruling issued by the Board of Marine Inquiry that declared the vessel seaworthy, and which exonerated the ship's captain and crew from administrative liabilities.

Different courts previously gave weight to the report of a surveyor, which indicated that the P. Aboitiz's cargo hold was flooded before it encountered a typhoon. The crew survived the accident.

Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing, who penned the decision, said the court's previous rulings on the case "may appear inconsistent" because "this court has variedly applied the doctrine of limited liability to the same incident."

But the tribunal said the negligence of the ship's owner could not be disputed.

Quisumbing said the high court made Aboitiz liable for cargoes insured by another firm, Monarch Insurance Co. Inc. in a June 8, 1993 decision.

In that ruling, "the court stressed that the circumstances therein still made the doctrine of limited liability applicable."

However, the third division said "an exception to the limited liability doctrine is when the damage is due to the fault of the ship owner or to the concurrent negligence of the ship owner and captain ... in which case, the ship owner shall be liable [for] the full extent of the damage."

"From the nature of their business and for reasons of public policy, common carriers are bound to observe extraordinary diligence over the goods they transport according to all the circumstances of each case," the court said.

"In all other cases, common carriers are presumed to have been at fault or to have acted negligently, unless they prove that they observed extraordinary diligence." *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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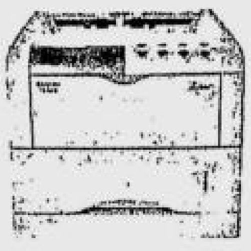

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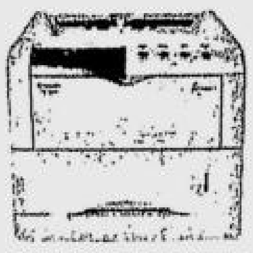

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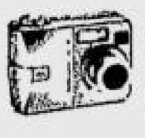

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Gov't reviews peace pact with Balweg militia

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BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

BAGUIO CITY—THE GOVERNMENT IS REviewing a peace agreement with the militia organized by the late rebel priest Conrado Balweg after admitting that it failed to fulfill its promises to the group.

Balweg, who signed the first peace agreement with the government on the heels of strongman Ferdinand Marcos' ouster in the 1986 Edsa Revolt, was gunned down by communist rebels in Abra on Dec. 31, 1999.

Jesus Dureza, President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on the peace process, met with members of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA) last week and cited the rebel group as "the most patient" in the country for sustaining a ceasefire with the government despite the state's lapses.

Guided by a directive from Ms Arroyo to begin developing "post-conflict areas," Dureza is introducing an economic plan to help Balweg's militiamen.

When he headed the Mindanao Economic Development Council, Dureza drew up an economic package to help members of the Moro National Liberation Front.

Renato Navata, Cordillera director of the Department of Agrarian Reform, said he was surprised to hear from CPLA commanders in Kalinga last week that their only requests from the government were clean water, good roads, and livelihood projects for old rebels.

"If these were all the rebels wanted from us [in the government], what stopped us from giving [these] to them?" Navata said during a session attended by Dureza, the Cordillera Regional Development Council, and Balweg's widow, Corazon Cortel.

But Juan Ngalob, Cordillera director of the National Economic and Development Authority, said regional agencies were unaware of any promises Malacañang had made to the CPLA because the talks never filtered down to the region.

The promises were never translated into projects affirmed by the RDC, Ngalob told Dureza.

During the term of then President Joseph Estrada, then Agrarian Reform Secretary Horacio Morales set out to convert some land areas occupied by CPLA forces into special agricultural zones. At the time, former journalist Abrino Aydinan was DAR Cordillera director but the zones favored a faction of the CPLA that broke away from Balweg.

This same faction, led by Mayor Mailed Molina of Bucloc, Abra, was the beneficiary of Ms Arroyo's directive to integrate more than 200 militiamen into the military.

Dureza said this compelled Balweg's faction to seek its own integration plans.

Molina and Cortel have since formed a "unified CPLA," but the government wants proof of unity before it can act on future demands, Dureza told the CPLA members.

Dureza later told the INQUIRER that the government was treating the CPLA peace agreement as an important historical document.

Combined with a lobby pushed by the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Balweg's popularity in 1986 helped inject provisions in the 1987 Constitution that recognized indigenous peoples' rights and their stake in ancestral lands.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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ROUNDUP

3 mayors face charges

DUMAGUETE CITY—Three mayors in Negros Oriental have not taken any steps to comply with provisions of Republic Act No. 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act), and have been recommended to face administrative charges, according to an evaluation by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Charlie Fabre, Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer based here, refused to identify the mayors but said they came from the three districts in the province. While most local government units have failed to completely comply with the law, they have taken measures to implement it, except for three towns, Fabre said. Celso Lorriega Jr. , DENR executive director for Central Visayas, said the department's head office and the National Solid Waste Commission had yet to act on the recommendation. Under the law, mayors must put up a sanitary landfill on or before January 2006 or face administrative charges.

Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Dilapidated patrol cars

DARAGA, Albay—This town's police force could not immediately respond to requests for help due to its dilapidated patrol car. Municipal police chief Senior Insp. Jose Capinpin said their service vehicle needed repair and a new battery. "It conks out every time we use it, hence the delayed response to the public's appeal for help." He said the town police would be more effective if the municipal government increased its appropriations and gasoline allowances so police mobility could be sustained.

Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Volunteer cops in Legazpi

LEGAZPI CITY—Some 500 volunteers, composed of street vendors and drivers of tricycles and vehicles for hire, are being recruited by the city government to assist lawmen. Vice Mayor Rico Salazar said that after completing training, the volunteers would be deputized and tasked with policing their own ranks and reporting on erring drivers who collect exorbitant fares and violate traffic rules, especially during summer when the city plays host to national conventions and tourism events.

Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Job fairs in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Labor and Employment has launched job fairs in different parts of the region from April 17 to May 17. The fairs are expected to make available 8,450 job positions, 2,850 of which are in local firms and 5,600 overseas. Labor Regional Director Alex Maraan said it was better to create job opportunities than increase wages that might result in the closure of many companies.

Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

New SC administrator

BAGUIO CITY—Deputy Court Administrator Christopher Lock took his oath of office as the new Supreme Court administrator on Wednesday. The post was vacated by Presbiterio Velasco, who was appointed Supreme Court associate justice on March 31. Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban led an en banc session on Tuesday to interview Lock, acting Court Administrator Zenaida Elepaño and Deputy Court Administrator Jose Perez. Also interviewed were Associate Justice Noel Tijam of the Court of Appeals and Associate Justice Lovell Bautista of the Court of Tax Appeals, said lawyer Raymund Martelino, supervising judicial staff officer of the Supreme Court's public information office.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

'Face-off with Fear'

A LIFE COACH from Canada and currently based in Rajasthan, India, shares her life experiences and advice on how to best handle modern society's technology-driven, every nanosecond-counts breakneck pace and accompanying situations, according to Brahma Kumaris. Denise Lawrence will speak in a program titled "Face Off (Shaking Hands with Fear, Anger and Pain)," at 6:30 p.m., May 23, at the St. Cecilia Hall in St. Scholastica's College in Manila; at 6:30 p.m., May 24, at Ayala Cinema 4, Ayala Center in Cebu; and at 4:30 p.m., June 1, at the Bulwagang Juan Luna, University of the Philippines Baguio. For inquiries, call (02)890-7960 (Makati), (02)922-9231 (Quezon City), (02)521-2015 (Manila), (032)254-5975 (Cebu) or (074)445-5935 (Baguio).

MILF tells mining companies to leave its 'territories'

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on Saturday urged mining companies to leave its claimed territory, saying it was against mining operations.

The MILF has presence in Central Mindanao and Davao del Sur, where Sagittarius Mines extracts copper and gold, and the Zamboanga Peninsula, where Canadian firm Toronto Ventures operates a mining site.

There are also mining activities in other areas where the MILF maintains a presence.

"It brings in more disaster rather than good things to the Bangsamoro people," Jun Mantawil, chair of the MILF peace panel secretariat, said.

Mantawil's revelation provided a sneak peak of what the future Moro-led area would be, as far as the mining industry is concerned.

The ancestral domain issue, however, remains the biggest stumbling block to the peace negotiations between the government and the rebel group.

On Thursday, the 12th round of informal talks held in Kuala Lumpur ended without significant gains as both sides failed to define the territory of the future Bangsamoro homeland.

"Without a strict and reliable mechanism that would save the people from the hazards of mining, the MILF cannot leave their lives to chance," Mantawil said.

The MILF, he said, doubted if mining companies cared about the lives of people because these "are profit-centered."

"More often than not, they leave the destiny of the people near or around mining sites to the tyranny of nature such as landslides, cave-ins, and floods," he said.

Mining also destroys the environment that helps feed the people, Mantawil said.

"The mining industry rapes, extracts, denudes, divests, drains and brings forth death and destruction to our environment and the marginalized population especially the indigenous people," he said.

But he said the MILF might agree to mining if companies could prove that their activities are environment-friendly. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI M. Bureau*

Luisita farmers feud over land ownership plan

By Tonette Orejas and Russell Arador
PDI Central Luzon Desk

TARLAC CITY—THE FEUD BEtween two groups of more than 5,000 farm workers at the Hacienda Luisita widened as they differed on the mode of ownership of the estate owned by the family of former President Corazon Aquino.

On Sunday, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas secretary general, Danilo Ramos, lambasted the Farm Workers Agrarian Reform Movement (FARM) that called for the individual titling of the 4,874 hectares of land eligible for the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

The KMP chapter, the Alyansa ng Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (Ambala), and the United Luisita Workers Union (Ulwu) preferred collective ownership.

Ramos called the FARM "newly formed and fake" and accused it of misrepresenting the farm workers.

The FARM, Ramos said, did not participate in the struggle to gain land ownership, work for the cancellation of the stock distribution option mechanism, and resist military and police attacks during the yearlong strike of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu) that ended in November 2005.

Thick skin

"There is no other term for it but callousness," Ramos said in text messages to the INQUIRER.

He said the FARM's demand for individual titles was "dubious and dangerous" because this would give the Cojuangco family a chance to reconcentrate land ownership.

"It seems that the FARM is pretending to represent the farm workers but is actually working for the benefit of the Cojuangcos," he said.

Renato Lalic, FARM secretary general, said the group was formed to "seriously face" the agrarian issue, mainly the landlessness of farm workers.

"We have no other motive but to guard and defend our individual rights to the land against those who will deny us these," Lalic said.

FARM chair Noel Mallari said his group was not fake.

"All of our members are legitimate farm workers. They all lived in Barangays Mabilog, Pando and Parang (at the Concepcion town side of the estate) and all were involved in the agrarian struggle since 1989," he said.

Legitimate

Mallari said he was the former vice chair of Ambala and a signatory to the original complaint asking the Department of Agrarian Reform to revoke the SDO.

The Presidential Agrarian Reform Council revoked the SDO after the workers' strike, but Hacienda Luisita Inc. questioned the decision of the council before the Supreme Court.

Mallari said the FARM had to be formed because Ulwu did "not clearly deal with the agrarian issue as it was more of a labor union."

His group, he said, had "never connived" with any person or group.

"In fact, one of the issues we would like to clarify is the agreement between Ulwu and the Cojuangcos after the strike. Apparently, Ulwu sold the blood and sweat of farm workers. In a memorandum of agreement, they agreed to be paid on a piecemeal basis [for back wages and benefits] and to subcontract the cutting of sugar canes," Mallari said.

Rene Galang, Ulwu president and Ambala chair, denied any irregularities.

Mallari, he said, "abandoned us during the strike and claimed credit for its success later."

Five titles

Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Narciso Nieto Jr. said no matter how many contending parties there are at Hacienda Luisita, the DAR "would not select the beneficiaries on the basis of their affiliations or organizations."

"We will also not bow to pressures from any of those disputing organizations," Nieto said on Sunday.

He said Hacienda Luisita was covered by five titles, which would be made into Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (Cloas) to be titled to a group of beneficiaries.

"We're using Cloas in the meantime because it will take a long time for the DAR to produce individual titles and subdivide the lots," he said.

Foiled STL project opens door to Vizcaya 'jueteng'

By Melvin Gascon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—The illegal numbers game "jueteng" has returned to the larger towns of this province with the reported revival of operations in other areas in Luzon, reports reaching the INQUIRER said.

Sources from police and jueteng employees have confirmed the resurgence of jueteng operations in the province, barely three weeks after the provincial board slammed the door on attempts to launch operations of the government-backed Small Town Lottery (STL) project.

The sources said jueteng began with dry run operations on May 3 and had since intensified with thrice-a-day draws. They said jueteng was operating in this capital town of Bambang and parts of Solano town.

The revived operations of jueteng came two months after its latest resurgence in early March. The operations in March stopped after Catholic Bishop Ramon Villena invited local and police officials to a dialogue to address the plea of jueteng workers to be given alternative livelihood.

On April 26, the provincial board passed a resolution urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to spare the province from the operations of STL, effectively rejecting the application of one Alex Mauricio to operate the local lottery.

Vice Gov. Jose Gambito, the acting governor, has denied accusations that he approved the revival of jueteng, allegedly taking advantage of the absence of Gov. Luisa Cuaresma, who is in the United States.

"If that is true, I should have done it immediately after the governor left for abroad. Why then did this [resurgence] happen only now that she is on her way back [to the country]?" Gambito asked.

He suspected that his political rivals concocted the allegations to tarnish his name. "I'm looking at the angle that this is a scenario made purposely to [discredit] me as acting governor."

He said the failed attempt of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, which runs the STL, had led to the revival of jueteng by those who hoped to earn a living from government lottery.

Nueva Vizcaya police director Senior Supt. Rogelio Damazo said he had yet to confirm the reported resurgence of the illegal numbers game in the province.

"So far, we have not found any venue for their draws, which is our best evidence against [the perpetrators]," he said.

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BUS COMPANIES, TOO

Jeepney operators nix fare increase

By Daxim L. Lucas

A SHAKY COALITION OF THE country's largest public transport organizations of jeepney operators has decided to abort its plan of filing a fare hike petition this week after a key sector withdrew its support for the move.

In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER late Saturday, United Transport Coalition legal counsel Vigor Mendoza said they decided to hold off on the petition after bus operators struck a deal with the government late last week.

Under the agreement, bus operators will enjoy concessions from the transportation department and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) in exchange for their commitment not to seek a fare hike.

The bus operators' about-face took the wind out of the transport sector's mounting agitation for a fare hike in the face of rising fuel prices.

"We figured that, if jeepneys increase their fares while buses don't, commuters might migrate to buses," Mendoza said, explaining why the jeepney operators backed down.

The minimum fare for jeepneys now stands at P7.50 for the first four kilometers, while that for buses stands at P8.25.

Mendoza said that a jeepney fare hike, assuming it would be granted, would make buses a cheaper mode of transport—a situation that jeepney operators don't want to happen.

Last week, the transport coalition lawyer said that jeepney groups would push through with their fare hike petitions "with or without the participation of bus operators."

"So their plan worked," Mendoza said, referring to the LTFRB's "divide and conquer" move of negotiating exclusively with bus operators.

LTFRB chair Ma. Elena Bautista could not be reached for comment as of press time.

According to Mendoza, the deal between the government and bus operators called for, among other things, the government to aggressively prosecute unlicensed operators in an effort to rid Metro Manila's roads of colorum buses.

Mendoza said that jeepney operators were now hoping to gain the same concession from the government in lieu of a fare hike.

"If they enforce this, it will remove about 500 jeepneys from Metro Manila's roads, and therefore increase turnaround time," he said, explaining how tighter regulation would help the legal jeepney operators.

Despite the group's sudden change of heart, Mendoza said they still reserved the right to revive their fare hike petition should fuel prices—especially for diesel fuel—rise further.

"Our new psychological threshold is P36 per liter of diesel," he said.

Last week, LTFRB's Bautista said she saw no possibility of a fare hike while diesel stood below P35 per liter.

BUDDHIST FETE
Monks of the Philippine Buddhist community perform the Bathing of the Buddha ritual for the cleansing of the local congregation during the celebration of Vesak Day in the Buddhist Year 2550 yesterday. RYAN LIM

Total raises gas prices

HOT ON THE HEELS OF ITS competitors, Total (Philippines) Corp. hiked fuel prices by 50 centavos a liter at 12:01 a.m. today.

The oil firm followed similar price increases implemented by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. last Saturday, and Petron Corp., Chevron Philippines Inc., Eastern Petroleum Corp., Flying V and Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. at different times yesterday.

The price hike was the second for Total and the other oil firms this month.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude skyrocketed to an average of $68.23 a barrel as of May 3 from an April average of $64.14 a barrel.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products" also surged to $90.35 a barrel in the first three days of May from $81.13 a barrel last month.

MOPS-based diesel soared to $91.12 a barrel in the May 1-3 period from $86.66 a barrel in April.

Since the start of the year, local oil firms have hiked gasoline prices eight times by a total of P4 a liter. Diesel and kerosene prices have risen nine times by a total of P4.50 a liter. *Abigail L. Ho*

Search for 26 seamen suspended

JOHANNESBURG—RESCUERS have suspended the search for 26 missing seamen, most of them Filipinos, whose ship sank off the South African coast on Wednesday, a spokesperson said.

"No other survivors have been found and the search has been suspended," said Meagan Sobotker, spokesperson for South African maritime search and rescue services, on Sunday.

Iron ore

The Alexandros T, sailing from Brazil to China with a load of iron ore, broke up and sank on Wednesday night in heavy seas some 300 nautical miles off the eastern port city of Port Elizabeth.

Seven of the bulk carrier's 33 crew members were rescued on Wednesday and on Thursday but 26 members of the crew, including four Greek citizens who abandoned ship wearing life jackets, were missing.

18 Pinoy crewmen

The Philippine government said 18 Filipinos were among the missing from the crew and that diplomats were seeking information from the Greek operator of the ship.

Sobotker said the search was suspended on Saturday "but was not cancelled" and that if new information surfaced on the fate of the 26, the rescue mission would resume.

Rescue chief Andre Botes on Friday expressed concern for the 26 men, noting that they had been lost at sea for many hours and that they would likely be suffering from hypothermia and unable to attract the attention of search parties.

The bulk carrier, which had a gross tonnage of 91,000, sent out a distress signal on Wednesday afternoon saying it was taking in water. It sank a few hours later in stormy seas.

Seven rescued

Of the seven sailors who were rescued, six were from the Philippines and one from Romania.

The stretch of coastline between Port Elizabeth and the eastern port of Durban is known as a graveyard for ships.

The worst disaster recorded there occurred in 1909, when the SS Waratah went down with all 211 on board.

The seas claimed the cruise liner Oceanos in 1991 and the carrier Kiperousa sank there in June last year. *AFP*

Inquirer's HIP magazines jive, sizzle and score

By Adel Gabot

IT TAKES A BROAD IMAGINATION to find a connection between singer Jason Mraz, a coffee tasting encounter with the Benedictine Monks of Malaybalay and storming a lair called Molten Core to fight legions of Fireguard Elementals.

Say what?

For the three new magazines from Hinge Inquirer Publications, the INQUIRER Group's magazine arm, they're all in a day's work.

Burn, a new music magazine, Game! a new...uh, gaming title, and the venerable F&B World (with its supplement Baking Press), a food service mag have been added to HIP's library of special niche titles. The additions are not lightweight me-toos either. In an industry where new magazines up like toadstools and disappear just as easily, HIP's new magazines bring to the table a host of experts and luminaries in their respective categories.

BURN
PUSSYCAT DOLLS
F&B World
A Wedding at
baking
A White Wedding
GAME!
Flyff
SURVIVAL GUIDE

GLOSSIES all in a row: Hinge INQUIRER Publications (HIP), the INQUIRER Group's magazine arm, has launched Burn, F&B World with supplement Baking Press and Game!

THE COOL STAFF of Burn magazine features all music genres—not just rock—with sense and style.

Burn, baby, burn

Take Burn, for example.

The name is as incendiary as it sounds. Named after the process of creating compact discs, its name, among other things, also evokes the passion the people behind it have for music. Unlike others on the market that have more angst than actual content, Burn offers coverage of all music genres— not just rock—both local and foreign and does it with sense and style.

Staffed by people like former MTV Ink editor in chief Kristine Fonacier, Palanca Awardee Luis Katigbak, musician and former NU107 radio DJ Zach Lucero, and a host of expert reviewers, critics and music industry mavens, Burn is an emerging force in the music scene, and is a worthy feed for your eyes and ears.

Burn's first issue came out last month, showcasing its different styles and faces with four cover variants: one featured the band Pupil, another with Orange and Lemons, still another with Christian Bautista and Nina, and the last one with The Pussycat Dolls.

Each issue came with a free collector's edition compact disc produced specifically for Burn by DJ Zach, featuring exclusive interviews with artists (even foreign-based ones like Jason Mraz), guides and music how-tos, special exclusive Burn-only numbers by the artists featured in the magazine, and new music from upcoming artists.

Ready, get set

Video gamers now have a valid reason to take their eyes off their monitors—HIP's new electronic entertainment title Game! plumbs Filipino-specific gaming issues, needs and themes, all packaged together with the frenetic energy of the typical 21st Century game.

Riding the crest of the online gaming boom, Game! focuses on online entertainment a bit more than the console and portable aspects of the gaming scene, offering tons of tips, guides, maps, walkthroughs and other information for the more popular foreign and local online games. Game also features prominent people in and behind the gaming scene, as well as reviews of available titles, accessories and other gear.

Game! Editor in Chief Howard Paw, an avowed gamer even before joining Game's staff (and an internationally respected veteran of many World of Warcraft campaigns like Molten Core) feels that gaming's future lies online. "It's the biggest phenomenon—the growth of online gaming is a direct result of the maturing of broadband services and technology," says Howard. "A foreign cable TV show about games recently did a feature on our country as being a haven for online games in our region!"

Food for thought

The most recent addition to the HIP repertoire is not quite as new as Burn or Game!. F&B World (the letters stand for Food and Beverage) has been around for several years as the only food service title catering (forgive the pun) to the food industry. F&B World is an industry publication that explores matters of the kitchen, not necessarily in the home, but mostly for restaurants and hotels, all the way to students learning to be chefs and practitioners in the industry.

The bi-monthly F&B World is an acknowledged reference and respected source of information in the field, covering not just food and beverage, but features top talents in the industry, tools and equipment, trends and practices of its market. The magazine also reviews venues and cooking gadgets, food, wine and everything related to the industry. Its subscribers are not just restaurateurs, chefs and hotel managers, but also students who intend to enter the field after their studies.

The F&B World staff are respected and acknowledged experts in their respective fields. Editor in chief Nana Ozaeta, who has been with F&B World since the beginning, credits the magazine for giving her unique experiences she never would have had in another profession.

Included with each issue of F&B World is a special supplement, that is for all intents and purposes, a separate magazine in its own right—Baking Press, which is dedicated to the baking industry.

Burn, Game and F&B World/Baking Press flesh out HIP's growing catalog of niche magazine titles, which include PC Magazine Philippines, Mobile Philippines and Golf Digest Philippines. The current issues of all these titles are now available at your nearest newsstand.

Aplus METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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Public warned vs cheap, plastic electric fans

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT MAY BE CHEAPER BUT IT could cost you more in the long run. Worse, it might even kill you and your family.

Manila firefighters yesterday warned against the use of unbranded electric fans following the fire that razed a two-story house in the Sta. Cruz area on Saturday.

SFO1 Emmanuel Gaspar of the Manila Fire Department said the fire that destroyed the house at 7043 corner P. Guevarra and San Lazaro Streets may have been caused by an "unattended, plastic fan."

Not for heavy duty

"This kind of electric fans, usually imported from China and sold at very cheap prices, are not meant for heavy duty use," Gaspar told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

The heat that has been plaguing the metropolis for the past few months may lead to carelessness among some city residents that could result in overheated fans, the fire official said.

"Failing to turn off these fans could cause their motors to overheat and result in fire incidents," Gaspar said.

Witnesses told the arson investigator that occupants of the house forgot to turn off the electric fan inside one of the rooms.

The fire, which began at 2:48 p.m., reached the fourth alarm and destroyed P500,000 worth of property before it was put an hour later, Gaspar said.

"Owners should also make sure that their electric fans are well-maintained and cleaned regularly," the fire official said.

In Marikina, Chief Insp. Antonio Razal, the city's fire marshal, urged residents to hire licensed electricians when setting up their house's electrical connections.

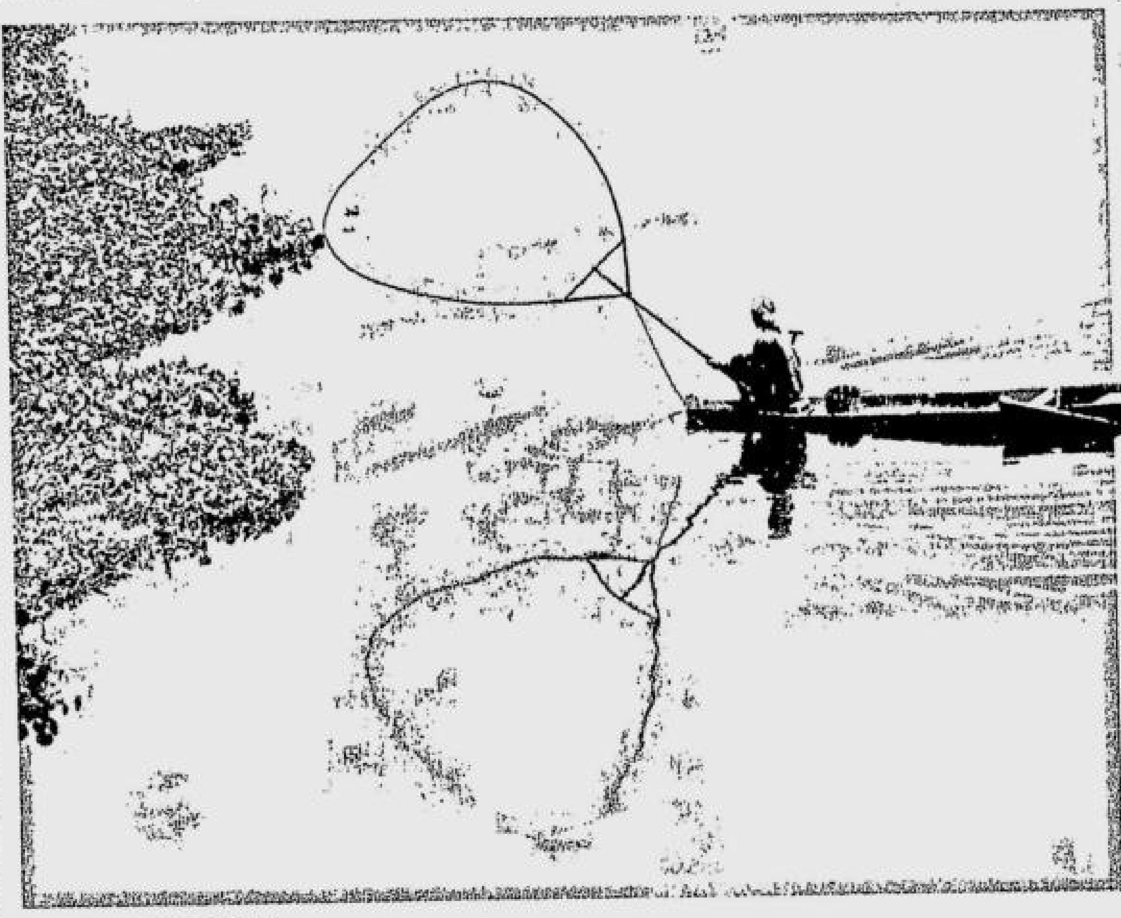
Get professional help

"Doing it yourself might cost less, but it can also cause fires," Razal warned yesterday.

He said the two fires which hit two relocation areas in the city this week, razing almost 30 houses and P8 million worth of property, were both electricity-related.

"To save money, some house owners, especially in resettlement areas, no longer hire licensed electricians. Their electrical connections are not done properly," Razal said in Filipino.

The first fire left 43 families homeless in Tumana, Barangay Concepcion Uno on Thursday. On Saturday, a fire razed nine houses and partially damaged five others in Doña Petra, also in Barangay Concepcion Uno.



CITY FISHERMAN
A man casts his fishing net at the Manggahan floodway in Pasig. The manmade canal has become a source of livelihood for residents who live alongside the waterway.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Criminology student killed in QC

By DJ Yap

HE HAD BARELY BEGUN HIS studies in fighting criminals when he became a victim of a crime himself.

Reycel Almeda, a 17-year-old criminology freshman at the University of Manila, was stabbed dead after getting into an argument with his neighbor in Quezon City on Saturday.

Almeda was chatting with his friends in front of his house on Interior-8, Barangay Old Balara at around 4:30 p.m. when Rogelio dela Cruz approached them, police said.

For unknown reasons, the suspect, who seemed drunk, started insulting the group, leading to an exchange of unpleasant words between them.

Dela Cruz abruptly left and went inside his house, but he returned moments later with a knife.

The suspect then stabbed the victim in the trunk before fleeing on foot. He has not been seen since, police said.

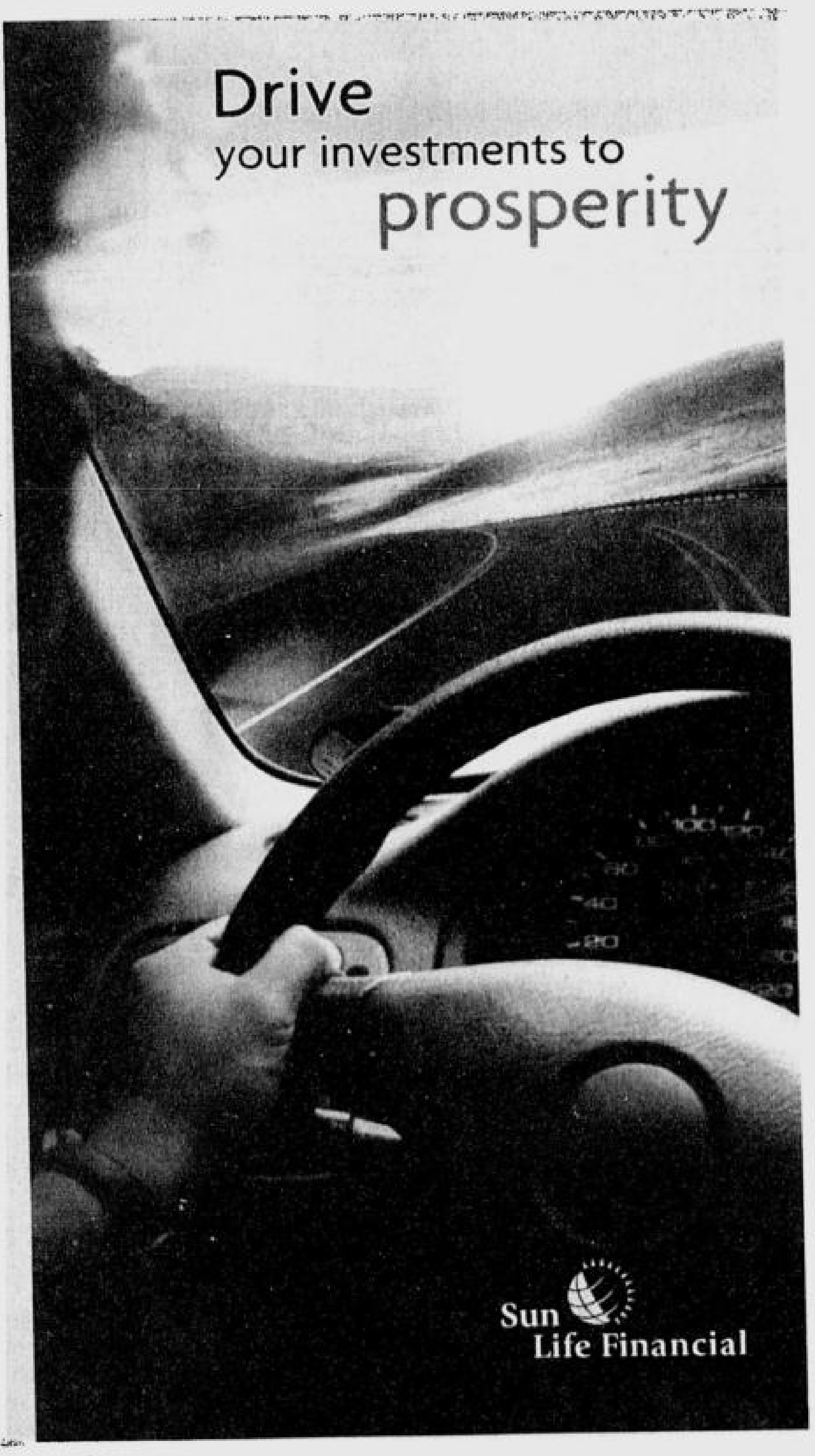
Almeda's mother rushed him to the East Avenue Medical Center but he died soon after.

Meanwhile, a man who had shown signs of depression after losing his job hanged himself from a santol tree in front of his house in Novaliches yesterday.

Feliciano Algamon, 41, was discovered hanging by a yellow nylon cord from the tree at 5:45 a.m. at 32 Lily St., Barangay Maligaya Park, police said.

The former steel company worker was last seen alive at about 1 a.m., drinking liquor in front of his house, said investigator PO3 Joseph Dino.

Police interviews with the victim's family showed that he had grown increasingly depressed in the past few years after he lost his job.



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PHILIPPINE EQUITY	Mostly Equities	Moderate to High	39.8%	20.2%	11.3%	87.1%
DOLLAR ADVANTAGE	Equities & Fixed Income	Moderate	3.9%	1.9%	7.4%	13.7%

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82 bird species find sanctuary on UP campus

Diverse habitats at Diliman ideal for nesting, says Wild Bird Club of the Philippines

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

> My heart in hiding
> stirred for a bird …
> – Gerald Manley Hopkins, S.J.

A LONG-TAIL shrike, one of the various species that can be found inside the university. EDWIN BACASMAS

WHILE NOBODY WAS LOOKING—EXcept, of course, the bird watchers and the scientists—the bird population on the campus of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City (and also the nearby Ateneo de Manila at Loyola Heights) began to increase.

The birds include common as well as relatively uncommon species, near-threatened, endemic (found only in the Philippines), resident as well as migratory.

During the warm months, the birds, whether campus residents or migratory, are active early in the morning and before sunset. During the cool months, the birds migrate from Siberia to Korea, East China, Taiwan and the Philippines. Others go on to Indonesia and Australia.

"The resident birds are here year-round while the migrants start arriving late August," noted Dr. Benjamin Vallejo Jr., a marine biologist of the UP Institute of Environmental Science & Meteorology. "By September-October *marami na sila* (there are many of them.)"

More bird sightings

Interest was first sparked by a report of the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP), which said that bird sightings in the UP campus had increased in recent years.

"The birds like it here because of the diverse habitats—forest, grassland, watery and muddy areas, and buildings for nesting," observed Jonathan Villasper, a UP professor and WBCP member.

The WBCP has reported sightings of 82 birds species. However, Alexander Aloy, a research associate of the institute, estimated the number of species observed at 50, with "*pa-isa isa na lang ang* (minimal) addition." Bird species sighted include the orange-tinged Cattle Egret, blue-winged Kingfisher, Barred Rail, White-Breasted Waterhen, Brush Cuckoo, Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker and the Colasisi.

The UP area where one is likely to see birds is the College of Science Complex. "There's a creek and not too many people," explained Vallejo. The species they have observed include the tree sparrow (maya), yellow-vented bulbul, maria cafra (pied-fantail) and, among the migrants, the brown shrike.

Near-threatened is the endemic Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon. "We saw the species only twice," said the biologist. "We don't know if they were breeding or passing through. That's the next stage of our research."

People lover

Surprisingly, some birds, among them the migrant brown shrike, like places where there are many people.

"I don't know why, my hypothesis is that this indicates a waste-disposal problem," speculated Vallejo. Meaning, these birds eat the leftovers from the garbage.

"They are opportunities feeders," quipped Aloy. The carnivorous birds eat insects and small reptiles like lizards. The yellow-vented bulbuls are quite tolerant of people, but prefer to live in trees. The *bato-bato* (zebra dove) like grassy areas but they don't want the grass to be cut often. They want an undisturbed environment. During the wet months, sunbirds love to eat the nectar of flowering plants.

Spotted at the Oblation—and not in other parts of the UP campus—are the Crested Mynahs. "They are attracted to feeds," said Vallejo. "I have noticed some nonacademic staff feeding them but they (the mynahs) don't like it when there are rallies there!"

Common species are found both at the UP and Ateneo campus. But some species like the Long-tailed Shrike, are more frequently seen at the Ateneo. "It must have something to do with land use," speculated the biologist. "My hypothesis is that the land at the Ateneo is mostly for academic purposes while the UP is a multi-use community. Also, the Ateneo has certain areas where they maintain the natural environment."

Escaped pets

The Colasisi has been observed at the UP, the Ateneo and other places where there are parks: "They could be escaped pets from the subdivisions. Our friends at the Ateneo have the same observation."

Then there's the Ring-neck Parrot, originally from India, which has been spotted here. "Definitely it is an escaped pet bird," said Vallejo. "In some places, like the American War Cemetery in Taguig City, it's reproducing. They are nesting there."

The marine biologist has just completed a study on the bird species, along with his colleagues Dr. Perry Ong, Annette Tamino and Villasper.

"We have to plant more trees," said Vallejo, the project leader. "The distribution of birds is related to greenery. So if more buildings are put up (at the UP), the greenery should be integral to the architecture of the buildings. And the trees planted should be indigenous. These are more adaptable to the climate, are typhoon-resistant, and attract a lot of birds."

DR. BENJAMIN Vallejo Jr. (right) and research associate Alexander Aloy: Looking for other birds in the UP campus. EDWIN BACASMAS

THE SAVANA Nightjar bird which was sighted near a creek in the campus. EDWIN BACASMAS

METROBRIEFS

Woman tries to kill self

TENSION gripped a community in Mandaluyong City after a 23-year-old woman threatened to jump from the 11th floor of a condominium on Saturday. Insp. Norman Florentino of the Mandaluyong City Police Community Precinct 5 said Jenneth Vicente, who lived in the Pioneer Highland Tower I at the corner of Madison and Pioneer Streets, stood on the edge of her unit's veranda at around 8:40 a.m. Vicente, who the police said seemed depressed, stood there for about half an hour and kept rescuers at bay by threatening to jump off if they came near her. Florentino said they had to forcibly open the door to Vicente's unit to bring her down from the veranda's edge. They then took her to The Medical City in Ortigas, Pasig, for a checkup.

Tina G. Santos

QC ready for rains

EVEN in the thick of summer, Quezon City is already bracing itself for the onset of rains. Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. has instructed local administrators and officials to begin contingency preparations for the rainy season that will begin late this month or in early June. The city government's primary concerns are health, environment and infrastructure, since rains tend to bring ailments like colds, flu, or even dengue, and cause flooding, as well as the wear and tear of roads. The city health department has began clearing canals, or "estero." It also intensified its educational campaign on diseases like dengue and measles.

DJ Yap

No model employee

A MAN was arrested for stealing a laptop computer from the company he had been working for in the past two months. Officials of Yehey Corp., located in Ortigas Center, Pasig City, called in the police right after Carlos de Peralta, 34, a De La Salle University graduate and sales officer for the company, reported for work on Thursday. He was accused of stealing a laptop computer worth P60,000 from the office. Sought for comment, De Peralta, who had been an English tutor for several companies, refused to be interviewed. SPO1 Geminer Tingne said De Peralta reported for work early on May 3. He went out of the office just minutes later, at 7:22 a.m., according to a lady guard who saw him carrying a laptop. When De Peralta reported for work the following day, his superiors called the police. Tingne said the suspect had admitted that he sold the laptop for P15,000 to someone in Quezon City.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Seminar on NGOs

TRITIUM Knowledge Center Publishing will conduct a seminar on how to set up and manage nongovernment organizations or foundations on May 9, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., at the Richville Hotel in Mandaluyong City. For information, please call TKCP at 5310084, 0919-2299777, 0919-2299780 and 0915-7804379 or send an e-mail to tritium@pldtdsl.net or tkcp_ph@yahoo.com.

Check all fire hydrants

TO HELP reduce the impact of fires, the Quezon City Council has urged the fire department to replace or repair damaged or unserviceable fire hydrants. In a recently approved resolution, Quezon City councilors asked the Bureau of Fire Protection, through city fire marshal Oscar Villegas, to inspect and repair fire hydrants in the city. The councilors led by principal author Restituto Malangen noted the "pitiful condition" of existing fire hydrants in the city. The councilors added that fire hydrants should always be in good working condition to prevent unnecessary loss of lives and property. Copies of the resolution were submitted to the fire department, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Inc. and the mayor's office.

DJ Yap

Grand homecoming

"FOREVER proud to be a Mapuan" will be theme of this year's 72nd grand alumni homecoming of the Mapua Institute of Technology on Saturday, May 13, at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel in Ortigas Center. Registration will start at 5 p.m. The highlight of the event will be the giving out of "The Outstanding Mapua" awards. Members of the Golden (1956) and Silver (1981) classes will also be honored. Mapua alumni who would like to attend can contact Rose Cruz at 5271134 and Romina Apo-Mangalindan at 9394477 or 9394489 for more details.

DENR: We must ensure protection of birds

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY ANGELO Reyes has called for the formal declaration of some portions of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City as a bird sanctuary to protect some 80 species that have been sighted in the campus.

In a statement, Reyes said the birds deserved the university's hospitality and required protection from human predators who might capture them for sale, hunt them for food or destroy their habitats.

He added that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had earlier signed an agreement with UP officials to undertake joint projects and share its expertise in a bid to improve the environment and promote its protection.

"The attention that the convergence of these birds has generated adds impetus to the cooperation between our institutions. The birds have freely chosen the Diliman campus as their metropolitan sanctuary. We have to ensure their protection," Reyes said.

He noted that six years ago, the campus was home to less than 40 bird species.

"Why the number of species doubled since then is a welcome mystery that is still being studied. The convergence of more than 80 species of birds in the campus is living proof that even in our highly urbanized areas, there are still niches where nature reigns and asserts itself. We are fortunate to have such an enclave in our metropolis, where we can continue to enjoy the beauty of nature, particularly the colors and music of birds," Reyes said.

Marikina sees more bikers

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

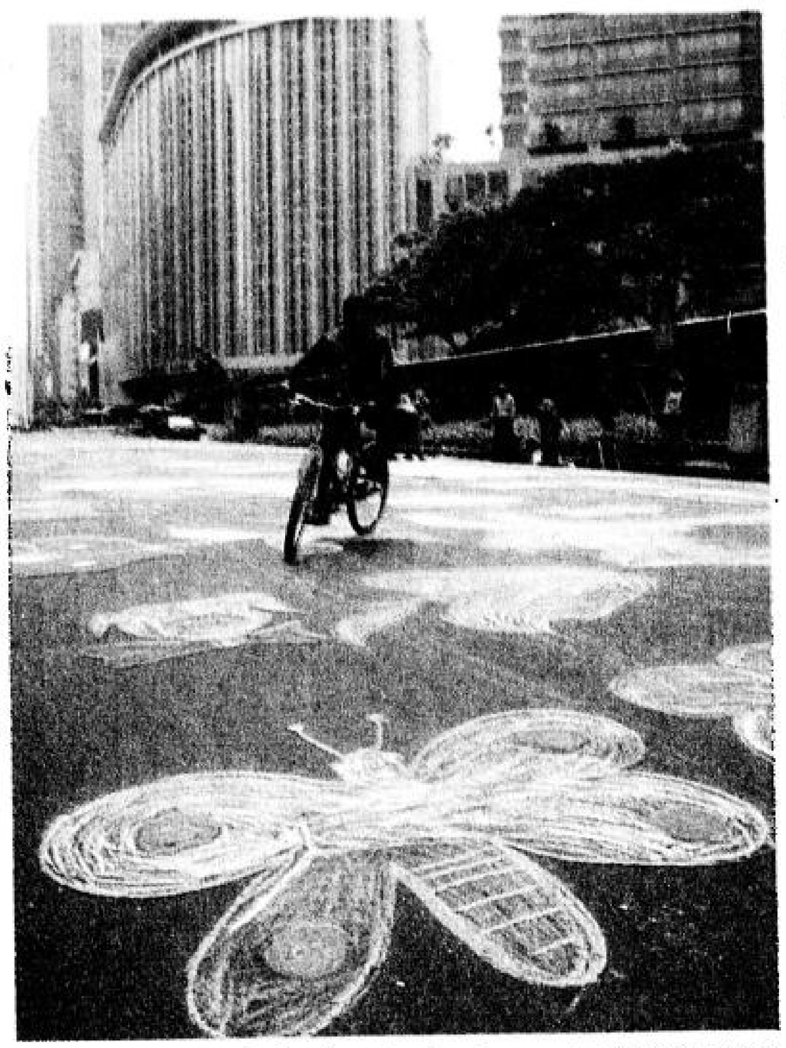
FOR EVERY 10 VEHICLES ON MARIKINA City's streets, at least one is a bicycle, according to a study conducted by the city government in March.

And with the imminent threat of oil prices shooting up, the City Bikeways Office is predicting that more residents will turn to biking as their main means of transportation.

"Biking is a very timely alternative to motorized vehicles," bikeways office head Lota Contreras said yesterday.

Contreras said that based on the survey, the number of bicycles on the city's streets was about 10 percent of the total traffic volume in Marikina.

Street art kicks off Makati's Mother Earth celebration



A MAN on a bike looks closely at the drawings created by 20 "artists" using pastel-colored chalks on Ayala Avenue. The major thoroughfare will be closed for several hours today for the "Mother Earth" grand parade. RYAN LIM

By Tarra V. Quismundo

MAKATI'S BUSIEST THOROUGHFARE was turned into an art canvas yesterday as artists, city residents and local government employees participated in the first chalk art project on Ayala Avenue.

Under the direction of artists Egai Talusan-Fernandez and Neil Doloricon, 20 people armed with pastel-colored chalk worked for several hours on a mural showing a woman representing Mother Earth cradling a baby. Both she and the baby were surrounded by men who had linked arms as if to protect them.

Larger than life

Around the figures were animals and larger-than-life flowers and butterflies.

The activity was in preparation for today's "Celebrate Mother Earth" grand parade along Ayala Avenue. The event, part of Makati City's celebration of its 336th founding anniversary, will be held from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

"The theme underscores Makati's commitment to the environment. We want to make a statement that progress should not be at the expense of our environment and the Makati community. The city government, the private sector and the residents are united on this important issue," Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said in a statement.

"We thought the colorful artwork would nicely contrast with the concrete road and surrounding buildings. Since the theme of the grand parade is to celebrate Mother Earth, we put images of nature on the street," said Joey Salgado, chief of the city's Information and Community Relations Department.

"This is our introduction of this activity here and hopefully, it will be received well and from there, we may start doing it regularly. We also chose a medium that is safe for the environment, because had we used paint, washing it off may be harmful because it may contain toxic materials," said Salgado.

He added that the chalk art may be expanded in the coming years to involve Makati-based companies in an art competition. Salgado said there were also suggestions to turn Ayala Avenue into a "street gallery."

Some 5,000 people are expected to take part in the parade, including 600 public school students dressed in nature-inspired costumes.

Traffic rerouting

Ayala Avenue, however, will be closed as early as 7 a.m. in preparation for the event. To avoid being inconvenienced, the Makati Department of Public Safety advised private vehicles coming from Edsa to take Gil Puyat Avenue (formerly Buendia).

Motorists bound for Manila or Pasay City should take Gil Puyat, turn left at Tordesillas Street, then take the Zuellig Loop.

From Edsa to Legaspi Village, motorists may go straight through Edsa southbound, take a right to Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), and then right to Paseo de Roxas.

Motorists bound for Salcedo village from Gil Puyat may turn right to Tordesillas Street. From Edsa, motorists may turn right to Ayala Avenue, right to Apartment Ridge, left to Paseo de Roxas, then right to Villar Street.

Buses plying Ayala Avenue, on the other hand, were advised to take Gil Puyat Avenue on their way to Manila from Edsa and vice versa.

Public jeepneys bound for JP Rizal Street from Makati Avenue should turn left to Gil Puyat Avenue. Those plying the Ayala-Mantrade route may pass through Makati Avenue toward Arnaiz Avenue.

Quezon Memorial Circle offers activities for kids, adults

By DJ Yap

THIS SUMMER, THE QUEZON Memorial Circle turns into a center for wellness, sports and the arts, as it offers fun-filled activities for the young and young-at-heart.

The Circle is hosting a series of workshops and exercises for children, their parents—and even their grandparents, according to Quezon City Parks Development Foundation president Charito Planas.

Now being offered at the Circle is an exercise program with the theme "Wellness 2006: Bagong Galaw, Bagong Musika," a stay-fit morning regimen combining dance taebo, aerosports, aerobics, grind workout, taichi and Pilates.

Training sessions on taichi and steppers, Brazilian dance workout, belly dancing, ballroom and line dancing are also being conducted.

"Art in the Park," an art summer workshop for children and adults (aged 5 and up), is also being held at the Circle on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule (9:30 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

The workshop, under its director Alma Quinto, a professional artist, offers "creative, culture-based, child-centered, collaborative and interactive activities designed to develop the participants' sense of imagination and passion for artistic expression."

Meanwhile, a new haven for senior citizens has been established: the "Tambayan for Older Persons," a co-project of the Circle with retired University of the Philippines professor Lydia Buendia.

Her "Friday happenings at the Circle" continue to attract the elderly, who learn dance and exercise through a type of training tailor fit for their age group.

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China defies Pope, ready to ordain another bishop

BEIJING—CHINA ON SUNDAY REjected Vatican criticism of its ordination of two Roman Catholic bishops without papal approval as the official Chinese church prepared to name yet another bishop.

The State Administration of Religious Affairs said the criticism "made no sense" and "ran against" the Vatican's desire for better relations with Beijing.

The Vatican rejected the consecration last week of two bishops by the state-sanctioned church, the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, which has no ties to Rome. A Vatican spokesperson warned that those who took part might face excommunication.

The Chinese statement said Beijing told the Vatican in advance of ordination plans but got no response—an apparent reference to their past practice of agreeing on bishops through informal contacts.

The statement came as China reportedly prepared to name another bishop on Sunday, this time with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI.

The Vatican-affiliated AsiaNews agency said the Rev. Paolo Pei Junmin was to be named coadjutor, or assistant, bishop for Shenyang, the biggest city in China's northeast.

The dispute between Beijing and the Vatican is a complex mix of faith and politics.

Chinese Catholics were ordered to cut ties with the Vatican after the 1949 communist revolution. Believers are allowed to worship only in state-monitored churches, though millions remain loyal to the Pope and attend Masses in secret.

The Vatican and China's official church, however, do communicate informally, and most Chinese bishops have sought and received papal endorsement of their appointments.

Chinese church leaders recognize the Pope as their spiritual leader and the official church has sent priests to Rome to learn new religious doctrine.

Restrictions on religious freedom are an irritant in relations with Washington. A report this week by the US Department of State ranks China along with Saudi Arabia, Iran and Sudan among eight "countries of particular concern" for denying religious openness.

China's Foreign Ministry on Saturday criticized the report as irresponsible and said it could harm US-Chinese ties.

China's official church says it has ordained more than 170 bishops over the years.

Late Saturday, the official Chinese church defended its latest appointments—Bishops Ma Yinglin in the city of Kunming and Liu Xinhong in Wuhu—as figures of "solid faith and moral integrity."

The ordinations "fully reflect the wish of all priests and believers," said a church statement quoted by Xinhua. *AP*

A CHINESE faithful prays at the Xishiku Catholic Church in Beijing Sunday, May 7. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

47 die in India heat wave

LUCKNOW, India—The death toll from a heat wave in India reached 47 on Sunday, as soaring temperatures hit several regions across the country, officials said. "Five people died in the heat wave in the last 24 hours, taking the toll in the state to 19," police official Manish Awasthi said from the northern Uttar Pradesh state capital Lucknow. In eastern Orissa, 27 people died of heat-related problems over the weekend. One death was reported in the holy city of Amritsar in Punjab state. Soaring temperatures are common in May in India ahead of the onset of the crucial southwest monsoon rains that normally sweep the subcontinent from June to September. In the tourist town of Agra in Uttar Pradesh, home to the Taj Mahal monument, the mercury shot up to 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit), four degrees above normal. Scores of cities and towns in India are facing water shortages and prolonged power cuts, triggering a spate of attacks on those running the overwhelmed state-run utilities. *AFP*

Tough times for embattled Tony Blair

LONDON—British Prime Minister Tony Blair is preparing to walk a political tightrope this week as a sweeping Cabinet reshuffle in the wake of dismal local elections fails to silence calls for him to quit. Blair—once dubbed "Teflon Tony" for his ability to shrug off bad news—will have to muster all his survival skills gleaned from nine years in office to win back the confidence of his Labor Party and the public, observers say. Working against him is a growing band of Labor rebels who want the prime minister to specify when he plans to make way for a new leader, widely expected to be Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown. These members of parliament (MPs) are gathering signatures on a letter urging Blair to lay out his succession plans by July. The prime minister has pledged to resign before the end of his third term, which expires by May 2010 at the latest, but has yet to set a public date. *AFP*

South Africa's explosive Zuma rape trial

JOHANNESBURG—A South African judge is to deliver a much-awaited verdict on Monday that could seal the downfall of former deputy president Jacob Zuma, accused of raping a young HIV-positive woman. Once the front-runner to succeed President Thabo Mbeki, Zuma has maintained that he had consensual sex with the 31-year-old woman, the daughter of a family friend, at his upmarket Johannesburg home on Nov. 2. But the alleged victim testified that the former number two, whom she considered a father figure, raped her in the guest room of his house, pinning her arms to the bed and forcing himself on her after she said "no" three times. The most sensational trial of the post-apartheid era has stirred debate on such explosive issues as the battle for the presidency and AIDS in a country where one in seven adults is living with HIV. It has also trained a spotlight on sexual violence in South Africa, where a woman is raped every 26 seconds, according to People Opposing Women Abuse, a nongovernmental organization. *AFP*

FBI detains 5 foreigners on US airliner

NEW YORK—Five foreign passengers on a US airliner were detained in a brief security scare Saturday until authorities learned they were in the United States "for a legitimate purpose," an FBI spokesperson said. The men raised suspicions on a domestic flight headed to Newark International Airport as they were referring to helicopter flight manuals and speaking to each other in a foreign language. "Rightfully so, people got suspicious," said Stephen Kodak, a spokesperson for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Four of the detained passengers were identified as "Angolan military personnel" and the fifth was from Israel, FBI special agent Steve Siegel said. Police boarded the American Airlines plane after it landed and detained the five passengers on request of plainclothes air marshals aboard the aircraft, which was bound from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport in Texas. The five men were released after spending more than two hours in the custody of the FBI, according to Marc La Vorgna, a spokesperson for the airport's operator, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. "They had been going through training over in Texas to be helicopter mechanics. This was all authorized," according to the FBI's Kodak. *AFP*

Israeli police, settlers clash in Hebron

HEBRON, West Bank—Israeli police, using a buzzsaw to remove a barricaded metal door, stormed a Palestinian home in the volatile West Bank city of Hebron on Sunday, forcibly evacuating dozens of Jewish squatters holed up inside. Jewish settlers outside the building tried to force their way inside immediately after police broke down the door. Police, dressed in riot gear, dragged the struggling protesters away, but scuffles between the two sides continued outside the house. Earlier in the day, officers and settlers clashed after hundreds of police, backed by soldiers, massed for the evacuation. The operation will be an important test for the new government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who plans a broad West Bank pullout during his four-year term. Olmert was widely criticized for his handling of the evacuation of a tiny outpost in February while he headed a caretaker government. More than 200 police and teenage protesters were injured, and critics accused police of using excessive force. Hebron, a city holy to Jews and Muslims, is home to about 160,000 Palestinians and some 500 Jewish ultranationalist settlers who live in heavily fortified enclaves. *AP*

OUTGOING CIA chief Goss at Tiffin University's graduation rites May 6. AP

Spy boss Goss mum about abrupt exit

WASHINGTON—PORTER GOSS said on Saturday his reasons for abruptly resigning as CIA chief after less than two years would remain a mystery, while the White House denied that US President George W. Bush had lost confidence in him.

As Goss left his home Saturday on his way to give a commencement address in Ohio, he declined to explain his resignation, telling CNN that "it's one of those mysteries."

Goss had come under fire inside and outside the agency during a difficult tenure that followed intelligence lapses over Iraq and the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

Several career intelligence officers left after clashes.

The White House denied a report in the Washington Post that cited senior administration officials as saying that Bush had lost confidence in Goss and had decided to replace him months ago.

"Reports that the president had lost confidence in Porter Goss are categorically untrue," White House spokesperson Dana Perino said as Bush flew to Oklahoma State University to deliver a commencement address.

"Porter Goss played a key role in keeping the focus on winning the war on terror and helped transform the agency to meet the challenging times we're living in and the times ahead," she said. *Reuters*

Singapore's ruling party gets landslide vote in poll

EXULTANT Singapore Prime Minister and head of the People's Action Party, Lee Hsien Loong. AP

SINGAPORE—SINGAPORE'S ruling party on Sunday celebrated a landslide victory in parliamentary elections that signaled continuity in the city-state's trademark mix of economic success, social stability and tight political controls.

Final results of Saturday's elections showed Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's People's Action Party won 82 of 84 seats in Parliament, including 37 seats it captured automatically before the election because the opposition did not contest them.

The breakdown of seats—with two for the opposition—is unchanged from the outgoing Parliament.

The result was widely expected, but the percentage of votes won by the ruling party dropped to 66.6 percent from 75.3 percent in the last election in 2001, indicating that more Singaporeans want new voices in government.

The PAP has won every general election since Singapore became independent in 1965, bolstered by its transformation of the resource-scarce former British colony into one of Asia's richest, most stable societies.

The state's sharp limits on speech and assembly have undercut the struggling opposition, and ruling party leaders have sidelined some opponents with defamation suits that have rendered them bankrupt, making them ineligible for office.

Lee said on Sunday that voters had rejected an opposition "more interested in impressing foreign supporters," referring to a low vote count for the Singapore Democratic Party of Chee Soon Juan, made bankrupt from defamation suits brought by the ruling party.

Chee is a frequent critic of the government's tight controls on free speech.

The vote was the first electoral test of the 54-year-old Lee's popularity since the son of national founder and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew became prime minister in 2004.

"We have a lot of work ahead of us," Lee said. "I want also to continue to encourage open, serious debate on issues because neither the PAP nor the government, nor, may I say, the opposition, has all the solutions and answers to all the questions and problems."

Since assuming power in 2004, Lee has promised a more open society. Critics say little has changed since the time Lee Kuan Yew ran the country from independence until 1990.

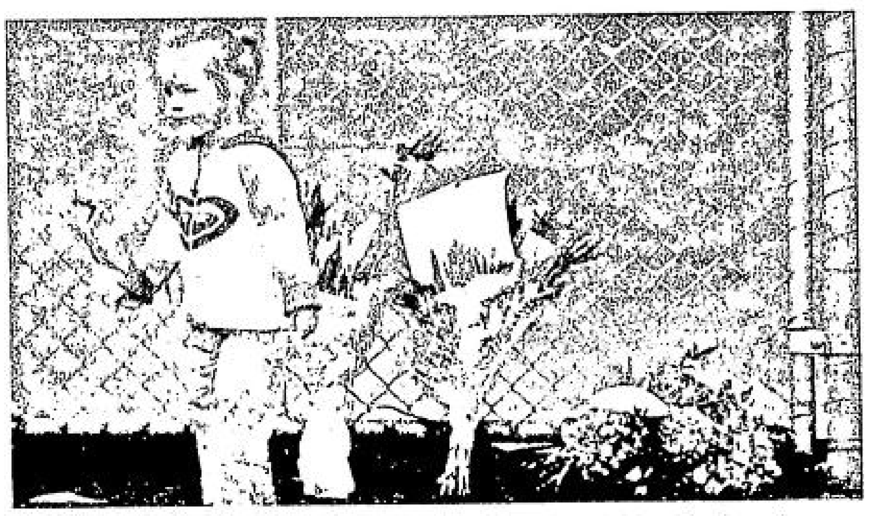
Ruling party leaders had dismissed suggestions that politics in Singapore amounted to one-party rule, saying they would welcome a vigorous contest with a credible opposition. They called many of the current opposition figures inexperienced or incompetent.

Lee, who said some Singaporeans may have voted for the opposition because of rising costs, had campaigned on a pledge not to leave behind the poor, the elderly and the unemployed.

Opposition leaders said they had put up a good fight.

"We are not thinking that we are going to overthrow the government overnight," said Glenda Han, a candidate from the opposition Workers' Party. "People are sitting up and looking at the opposition in a more positive light." *AP*

12 days trapped in mine, and still counting



A GIRL leaves flowers at the entrance to the Beaconsfield gold mine where two miners, Todd Russell and Brant Webb, have been trapped underground for 12 days in Beaconsfield, Australia, May 7. REUTERS

BEACONSFIELD, AUSTRALIA—RESCUERS set small explosive charges to chip away at the last meter of solid rock between them and two Australian miners who have been trapped underground for 12 days, but hopes faded they would be freed on Sunday.

Progress toward Brant Webb, 37, and Todd Russell, 34, was painstakingly slow in the final stages of the rescue effort because of a hard rock barrier and the risk of causing a cave-in if heavy machinery was used to finish the planned escape shaft.

Matthew Gill, manager of the Beaconsfield Gold Mine, said it was "unlikely" the men would be freed on Sunday.

"Work is continuing on the remaining part of the rescue tunnel," Gill told reporters. "The work is hard going and rescuers are now making slow progress using a low shot blasting technique."

He said medical teams were constantly monitoring the pair and that they were in "reasonable health" considering their ordeal.

The men, both married fathers of three children, have been entombed in a tiny steel cage almost a kilometer underground since an earthquake caused a rockfall on April 25.

Over the past week, rescuers have bored through more than 14 meters of solid rock using a giant drilling machine in an effort to reach the men.

But cutting the final stage of the escape tunnel has been slow and arduous work for the teams of miners who are serving as rescue workers, toiling on their backs in cramped conditions using hand held tools.

Gill said using jackhammers against the rock, which is five times harder than concrete, was proving futile and that the teams were now using 30 grams of explosive at a time to try to break up the rock.

Measuring progress now in millimeters, officials said the miners must cut through another 1.1 meters of rock before they can begin tunneling a similar distance vertically into the cavity where Webb and Russell have survived for more than 270 hours. *AP*

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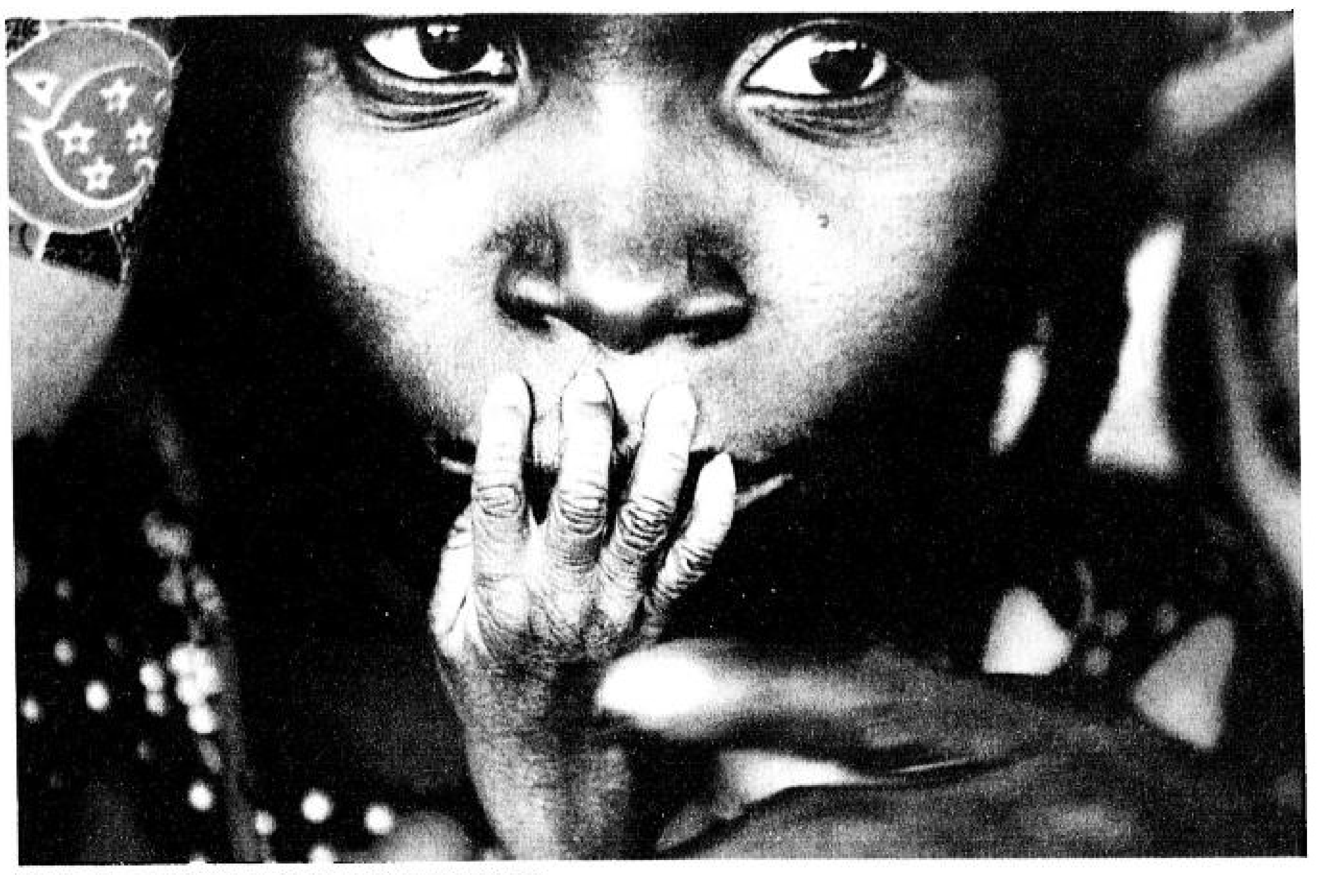

WORLD PRESS PHOTO OF THE YEAR
Mother and child at an emergency feeding center in Tahoua, Niger, Aug. 1, 2005, taken by Canadian photojournalist Finbarr O'Reilly for Reuters. The picture, described by O'Reilly as an image of strength, was picked out from 83,044 images submitted by 4,448 photographers from 122 countries to the annual competition, reputedly the largest and most prestigious in the world. REUTERS

30 die in Iraq blasts; UK chopper downed

BAGHDAD—CAR BOMBS KILLED 30 PEOPLE IN IRAQ on Sunday and wounded more than 70 in one of the bloodiest spasms of violence of recent weeks as political leaders closed in on a deal to form a national unity government.

The southern city of Basra was largely calm as British military engineers examined the wreck of a helicopter whose apparent shooting down was followed by clashes between troops and youths chanting triumphal Shiite militia slogans.

Twenty-one people were killed and 52 wounded when a car bomb went off close to the main central bus station in the Shiite holy city of Kerbala, 110 km south of Baghdad, police said. Around the same time, two cars exploded in the capital.

A suicide car bomber hit an Iraqi army patrol in the mainly Sunni northern district of Aadhamiya, killing eight people and wounding 15. Soldiers and civilians were among the casualties.

Iraqi and US forces conducted a sweep for rebels in Aadhamiya on Saturday, the US military said. The area is a stronghold of Sunni Arab insurgents.

A second car bomb exploded at a busy traffic intersection in northern Baghdad, killing one civilian and wounding five. The target was not clear.

Interior Ministry sources said 42 bodies had been found in the last 24 hours in the capital alone, including eight found dumped near Kindi hospital in central Baghdad. The figure is in line with levels of violence seen in recent months.

Sectarian violence sparked by the Feb. 22 bombing of a major Shiite shrine in Samarra has led to the discoveries of bodies—many showing signs of torture—on a frequent basis.

Sunni leaders blame progovernment Shiite militias and the Shiite-dominated police for some of the killing. Militia leaders speak of a need to respond to three years of violence by insurgents from the once dominant Sunni minority.

Sectarian bloodshed has prompted warnings Iraq is sliding toward civil war and added urgency to efforts by political leaders to form a unity government that can reverse the trend.

Nuri al-Maliki, the Shiite Islamist nominated as prime minister two weeks ago after months of stalemate following a December election, says he expects to name a Cabinet shortly.

Representatives of the majority Shiites, Kurds, Sunnis and others were meeting again on Sunday. On Saturday, the Shiite vice president said he expected a deal "in the next few days."

The US military said last week that Sunni Islamist hardliners around al-Qaida figurehead Abu Musab al-Zarqawi were stepping up violence around Baghdad, aimed at derailing the efforts to forge a consensus government.

Zarqawi has in the past declared war on Shiites, who were oppressed under Saddam Hussein. Attacks in Kerbala and other Shiite centers have been characterized by some Iraqi leaders as attempts to provoke Shiite militias into all-out warfare. *Reuters*

Old habits die hard in graft-prone S. Korea

By Lim Chang-won

SEOUL—WHEN THE HEAD OF Hyundai Motor was hauled off to jail last month accused of master-minding a huge slush fund, it looked like business as usual for graft-prone Korea Inc.

For years South Korean governments paid lip service to cleaning up corporate conduct and to raising business practices to international standards.

In reality they tolerated corporate wrongdoing characterized by cozy ties to politicians, reckless expansion and complete lack of transparency.

As long as companies kept producing and South Korea's economy kept growing, the government turned a blind eye.

But after the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, South Korea's over-extended conglomerates were on the verge of collapse.

Politicians finally decided to act but the arrest of Hyundai Motor's Chung Mong-koo indicates to what extent the corporate reforms they enacted have so far failed to bite.

"Old habits die hard and these are all decades-old diseases. It is hard to cure them overnight," said Lee Phil-sang, an economist at Korea University.

Frequent scandals have punctuated the decade since the financial crisis, culminating with the arrest of Chung, who presides over Korea's second largest business empire and the world's seventh biggest automaker.

Prosecutors accuse Chung of using the slush fund to bribe government and financial officials as well as facilitating the transfer of corporate wealth and management control to his only son, Chung Eui-sun.

SOUTH Koreans perform Ilmu, the royal ritual dance, during the Grand Ancestral Rite in the Jongmyo, the main ancestral shrine of the Chosun Dynasty, in Seoul May 7. REUTERS

Chung is not alone. South Korea biggest company, Samsung, with 63 companies accounting for 20 percent of Korean exports, is also under investigation. Prosecutors are looking at alleged irregularities in the transfer of wealth from the Samsung Group's patriarch Lee Kun-hee to his son, Jae-Yong.

Lee was also the target of a probe earlier this year into allegations that the group illicitly funded politicians.

Separately this year, the Seoul district court fined International Olympic Committee member Park Yong-sung $8.2 million and handed him a three-year suspended jail term for helping siphon $30 million from the Doosan Group which he and his family control.

The idea of Korea Inc. was born in the early 1960s, when South Korea's past authoritarian government nurtured the family-run business conglomerates, known as chaebol.

As they grew, they were credited for transforming the poor, agricultural country into an industrial powerhouse.

But the imperious executives ran the companies for founding families and not for shareholders, pursuing expansion instead of profit, manipulating accounting books and developing complicated corporate structures to maintain their empire-building plans.

Changes did not come until the Asian financial crisis forced the cash-starved conglomerates to spin off insolvent subsidiaries, soliciting foreign investors and cutting costs and laying off employees. *AFP*

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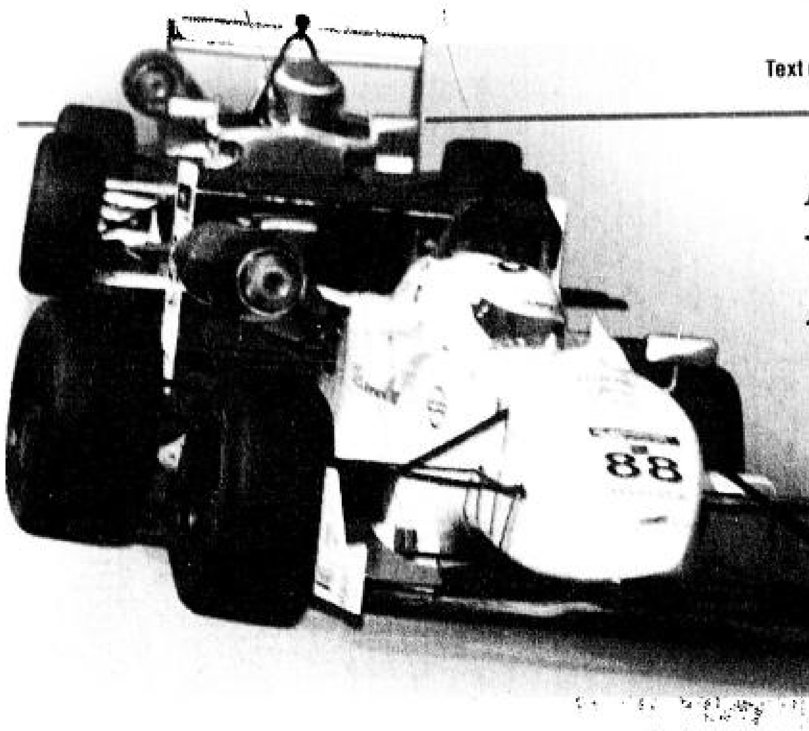

FILIPINO top gun Tyson Sy (88) rounds a bend just in front of Ireland's John O'Hara early in the AF3 at the Batangas Racing Circuit. ROGER MARGALLO

ASIAN F3 ROUND 2

Fiery Sy makes it two in a row

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—TYSON SY didn't expect to see Irishman John O'Hara's car on his rear view mirror just two laps into the second round of the 2006 Asian Formula Three Series Sunday at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

With O'Hara fast closing in, Sy was ready to relinquish the early lead he had gained after a fast start, content to settle for a podium finish in the scorching conditions and add valuable points to his opening-round victory less than 24 hours earlier.

And then it happened. The 25-year-old Irishman, runner-up last year and in 2004, spun out in the fourth lap while tailing Sy at the second turn of the 3.4-kilometer circuit, nearly hitting the Filipino top gun.

With his closest pursuer out of the race, the 18-year-old lead driver of

FIERY/ A30

2006 AF3 Series

Second Round
(Batangas Racing Circuit)

1. **Tyson Sy** Philippines	16:37.023
2. **Dillon Battistini** England	16:51.920
3. **James Winslow** England	16:52.159
4. **Dado Peña** Philippines	16:53.114
5. **Ali Jackson** Ireland	16:57.357

Reyes tops Vietnam pool with a flourish

Whips China's Li in finals

HO CHI MINH CITY—EFREN "BATA" REYES outsmarted and outshot China's Li Hewen, 11-6, in the finals Sunday to claim the first leg of the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour and pocket the $10,000 champion's purse at the jampacked Nguyen Du Sports Hall.

Just like in his previous matches, the player known internationally as the "Magician" got off to a quick start and led 4-1 before Li, the surprise finalist, managed to settle down and knot the count at 5.

The bespectacled Li could have seized the upper hand, but his foul shot in the 11th rack began a string of errors that paved the way for Reyes, the 2004 Tour champion, to win the next four racks and take an imposing 9-5 advantage.

Li managed to stop the rampage in the 15th rack when he ran out the table after Reyes' miss on the 1-ball.

But it wasn't simply Li's day as he suffered a dry break in the next rack and Reyes cleaned up to sit on the hill. The 51-year-old Reyes closed out the match in spectacular fashion, connecting on a 1-9 combination.

"Li had his chances, but his poor breaks and bad safety shots did him in," said Reyes, who was mobbed by both Vietnamese and Filipino fans.

"I expected the support from the Filipino crowd, but I didn't expect the Vietnamese fans to treat me so well."

Li could only rue missed chances.

"I knew I had a chance, but during the middle part, I was losing confidence already since I took bad safety shots," he said. "Reyes is really an experienced player and you can't make too many mistakes against him."

Reyes had advanced to the finals with an 11-5 whipping of local bet Nguyen Phuc Long in the Final Four.

With the win, Reyes has now won six leg titles in the Asian Tour. The Tour heads off to Bangkok for the second leg on June 2-4.

The Asian 9-Ball Tour is the only ranking tour in Asia where players can earn points to qualify to the World Pool Championship. The top 10 finishers at the end of this year's Tour will automatically advance to the WPC.

Adding to the stakes is a total prize money of $160,000 in the four legs of the Tour.

Reyes beat bosom buddy Francisco "Django" Bustamante, 9-5, in the quarterfinals of the event organized by ESPN Star Sports.

Li advanced to the semifinals after besting countryman Xu Meng, 9-5.

Two other Filipinos, Marlon Manalo and Alex Pagulayan failed to move past the group stage as they split their two assignments. *With a report from Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

ASIAN 9-BALL TOUR
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EFREN "Bata" raises his trophy after ruling the kickoff leg of the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. HANDOUT PHOTO

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33,958	22,639	16,979	12,678	10,188	8,965
47,500	31,667	23,750	17,733	14,250	12,540
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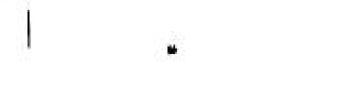

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TALK 'N Text's Willie Miller drives past Red Bull's Nick Pennisi. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Bulls hold off Phone Pals

By Jasmine W. Payo

RED BULL COACH YENG GUIAO'S TEMPERAMENT GOT A REAL TEST YESTERDAY.

Squandering a comfortable lead, the Bulls needed a few key breaks down the stretch to escape with an 84-81 victory over Talk 'N Text in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

The frantic finish might not have been ideal for Guiao, yet he pointed out the more important fact—the Bulls remain unstoppable for a third-best 7-6 record.

"It's a win but we would have wanted a better finish," said Guiao. "It's our fourth win in a row so we'll take it as they come. What's important is the overall picture, we're executing better."

The Bulls again followed the aggressive lead of former Ateneo teammates Enrico Villanueva and Larry Fonacier, who combined for 34 points.

Lordy Tugade and Celino Cruz, both coming off the bench, also aided the Bulls in crucial stretches in the last six minutes.

Relentless in their offense, the Bulls cruised to a 68-57 advantage by the end of the third period.

But the Phone Pals found their offensive rhythm and opened the fourth quarter and went on a 15-2 tear, capped by Felix Belano's back-to-back triples to push Red Bull behind, 70-72, with 6:20 left.

Fairly quiet most of the game, Belano drilled in 10 of his 14 points in the last seven minutes.

A Tugade three-pointer rejuvenated the Bull's offensive game, putting them back on top at 73-72. But the Phone Pals never eased off and even after trailing by three towards the end of the match, still had a shot at forcing overtime after Red Bull's Junthy Valenzuela turned the ball over in the closing seconds.

Luckily for the Bulls, Victor Pablo missed a potential tying three-pointer at the buzzer.

In the second game, Alaska repulsed Coca-Cola, 84-72.

The scores:

First Game

RED BULL 84—Villanueva 19, Fonacier 15, Tugade 10, Valenzuela 10, Cruz 9, Bugia 6, Najorda 4, Baguio 4, Pennisi 3, Alvarez 2, Robinson 2, Hrabak 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 81—Belano 14, Taulava 12, Alapag 11, Ferriols 10, Carey 10, Miller 6, Cardona 4, Juinio 4, Pablo 4, Avenido 0.

Quarters: 22-16, 42-37, 68-57, 84-81

Second Game

ALASKA 84—Belasco 22, Allado 13, Hugnatan 12, Dela Cruz 10, Cortez 9, Cariaso 9, Thoss 6, Wilson 2, Bajar 1.

COCA-COLA 72—Reavis 16, Arigo 16, Wainwright 10, Antonio 9, Peek 7, Abarrientos 6, Mamaril 4, Miranda 2, Singson 2, Capati 0.

Quarters: 23-10, 43-34, 61-58, 84-72

Fiery Sy makes it two in a row with Round 2 victory

From page A29

Speedtech Asia zoomed away to his second straight win, clocking 16 minutes and 37.023 seconds, besting the competition by nearly 15 seconds and warming the hearts of the jampacked crowd.

Counting the 20 points he won in the opening round, Sy will go into the third round later Sunday with 40, 10 points ahead of AF3 newcomer Dillon Battistini of England who finished second again.

"I had a good launch, there was no problem with the car," said Sy, expecting Battistini, who started second on the grid, to be his closest rival for round honors. "But I was shocked when I saw John in my rear view mirror."

O'Hara of Aran Racing had grabbed second from Battistini as early as the second lap.

O'Hara, obviously upset, excused himself from being interviewed. Sy, meanwhile, started entertaining thoughts of winning this year's overall title in the series backed by PLDT myDSL, PLDT myPAD, Yokohama Tires, Lima City Hotel, Denso Spark Plugs, Big Shot Billiards, Suzuki, Oxy Enhanced Water, Tuason Racing School, Ford and Mossimo. Race enthusiasts can log on to www.asianf3.net for regular updates.

"I was only thinking of a top three finish this season but after these wins *hindi na masamang mag-isip na kayang manalo* (it wouldn't be bad to to think that I can go all the way)," said Sy.

Christian Jones of Australia, the 2004 winner, and Ananda Mikola of Indonesia, last year's topnother, went on to win the overall titles after dominating the early rounds of the series.

Battistini, of JA Motorsports, was second in 16:37.023 while JA Motorsports teammate and fellow Briton James Winslow, salvaged third anew with a time of 16:52.159.

"It was exciting but the tires took a little time to warm up," said Battistini, who nearly spun out in the first lap.

Winslow, hampered by a bad start, dropped to sixth place in the second lap. He eventually recovered but Battisini got in the way of his bid to finish higher.

Indonesian Moreno Soeprapto, last year's Promotions class winner now driving in the overall class alongside Sy at Speedtech Asia, also duplicated his fourth-place finish in the first round but was slapped a 30-second penalty for jumping the start.

Soepranto was relegated to seventh, enabling Filipino Dado Peña of Team Goddard, who crossed the finish line in fifth place, to move up to fourth with a clocking of 16:53.114.

"I had the chance (to finish higher) but I didn't want to push it," said the 18-year-old Peña. "I didn't want to mess up this race. There's still another race."

The Filipino completed just one lap in the initial round last Saturday after hitting fellow Filipino Pepon Marave's car.

Irishman Ali Jackson, another newcomer at Aran Racing, also benefited from Soeprapto penalty and rose from sixth to fifth. Bagoes Hermanto of R&W Team Indonesia Joson F3, finished sixth, while Marave, of Shell Helix Kinetic PCSO, came in eighth, followed by JP Tuason of Tuason Racing School who topped the Promotions class for cars with chassis built in 2000 and below.

Gaby dela Merced of Speedtech Asia, who managed just seven laps in the first round, completed 12 trips at the track this time and finished 11th overall, ahead of fellow lady driver and former Asian Karting queen Michele Bumgarner who stalled at the start and completed just 10 laps.

BACK-TO-BACK champ Tyson Sy shows his trophy to fans. Sharing his winner's place on the podium is Mossimo bikini winner Michelle Padua. ROGERMARGALLO

PSC seeks upgrade as Palaro gets under way

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NAGA CITY (VIA BAYANTEL)—THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission's proposed upgrade from being a mere government agency to a department level was revived yesterday as the Palarong Pambansa opened with Vice President Noli de Castro declaring the Games open.

De Castro exhorted the 6,000-plus athletes from 17 regions to embrace sportsmanship even if they win or lose.

"Sportsmanship is what we need in this country to achieve progress," said De Castro in Filipino at the crowded Metro Naga Sports Complex.

He was joined in the rites by Bicolano Sen. Joker Arroyo, Budget Sec. Rolando Andaya, Education Sec. Fe Hidalgo and Naga City Mayor Jessie Robredo.

PSC chair Butch Ramirez, who also graced the rites, said this is the "perfect time" to push for the department status of the agency, which was created in 1990 thru Republic Act 6847.

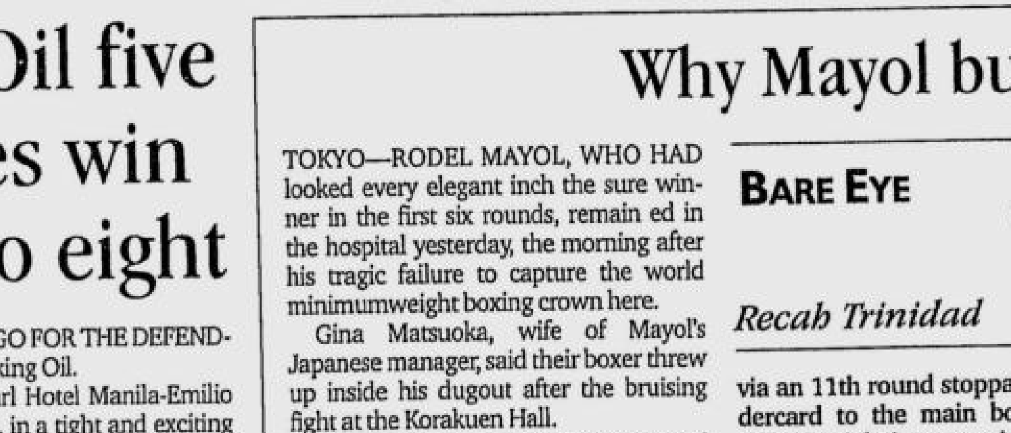
Ramirez said the PSC can "accomplish more for RP sports, athletes and officials" as a department and not a branch of the Office of the President.

Meanwhile, confusion hit the Games as gymnastics was held a day earlier because the venue, the gym in the University of Nueva Caceres, was to be used for the Mayor's Night on Monday, creating sudden changes in the schedule.

National Capital Region's Mage Wagan was initially thought to have won the first gold in rope event of the rhythmic gymnastics but it turned out that she was competing in it as part of the all-around event.

The 13-year-old Wagan emerged best in rope and hoop but will still have to perform in the ribbon and ball events before notching a gold medal.

WINNING RUN Isidro Abelo (partly hidden) of the Philippine Air Force kicks up a cloud of dirt as he steals home off Philippine Army catcher Dennis Daep in the eighth inning of the two squads' championship match yesterday in the National Open softball tournament at the Rizal Memorial Stadium. PAF took the crown, 5-4. RYAN LIM



Nat'l U-17 tourney kicks off

SAN CARLOS CITY—CLOSE TO THREE months after steering an underdog team to the national title in Iloilo City, Negros Occidental football coach Freddie Lazarito admits the euphoria of the victory has yet to fade.

"I still haven't gone over that victory," said Lazarito, whose squad stunned an experienced National Capital Region side for the National Open men's crown in February.

But Lazarito is facing another challenge: To turn a team formed two weeks ago into a winning machine in the national girls' Under-17 football championships that starts here today.

Lazarito's squad goes up against favorite Muntinlupa-Las Piñas-Parañaque in their opening match at 3 p.m.

The MPL XI of coach Ernie Nieres boasts of star striker Jessica Ryon of Southville, who is expected to team up with Tasha from Woodrose, April of Miriam College and Becca of La Salle-Zobel.

In the other Group C match, the combined squad Cagayan de Oro and Misamis Oriental take on Rizal also at 3 p.m. on field 2.

In other matches, Cebu battles Masbate at 7:30 a.m., simultaneous with the Iligan-Iloilo match, before Davao and Bukidnon collide at 9:30 a.m. South Cotabato and Negros Oriental test each other's mettle. *Cedelf P. Tupas, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Spring Oil five stretches win streak to eight

EIGHT DOWN, TWO TO GO FOR THE DEFENDing champion Spring Cooking Oil.

Spring outsteadied Pearl Hotel Manila-Emilio Aguinaldo College, 73-70, in a tight and exciting contest Thursday to move with two more games of completing a rare two-round sweep in the 2006 PICAA Open Basketball tournament at the EAC Gym in Manila.

Alvin Morante nailed a three-point shot with 56 seconds left to shatter the game's last deadlock at 70 and the Cooking Oil Masters defended well in the closing seconds to seal their eight win.

The Cooking Oil Masters of national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla only have to beat Wang's Secret Spices and Foods and Homer's Cagers to complete the sweep in the tourney supported by Manila Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna, Chloe Lightings and Tomish Café (Dapitan).

UP-Mighty Filter won by forfeiture over Wang's SSF in the other game.

The scores:

SPRING 73—Tiongco 13, Yee 11, Reyes 11, Morante 10, Bamson 8, Castro 8, Neo 6, Ollano 1, Capobres 0, Yambao 0

PEARL-EAC 70—Songco 24, Buenafe 17, Musni 8, Samlous-Uy 8, Castillo 6, Baybay 3, Ebuen 2, Evangelista 2, Anzures 0, Hubalde 0

Quarters: 25-25, 51-39, 62-55, 73-70

Why Mayol bungled his world title bid

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

TOKYO—RODEL MAYOL, WHO HAD looked every elegant inch the sure winner in the first six rounds, remain ed in the hospital yesterday, the morning after his tragic failure to capture the world minimumweight boxing crown here.

Gina Matsuoka, wife of Mayol's Japanese manager, said their boxer threw up inside his dugout after the bruising fight at the Korakuen Hall.

Mayol was both shaken and burned out but a CT scan done on the failed title-seeker from Mandaue City did not bare any serious injury.

"He was severely drained and was still being administered dextrose," Ms Matsuoka explained.

It was not clear when Mayol, ordered to take a complete rest, would be released.

* * *

Well, this is not supposed to be a consolation, but Eagle Kyowa, the defending champion who came from behind to frustrate Mayol's crown bid, was also in the same hospital where Mayol landed Saturday night.

"He (Kyowa) was still throwing up and was, in fact, in a wheelchair," reported Mayol stablemate Malcolm Tuñacao.

Tuñacao, who successfully defended his Orient-Pacific bantamweight title via an 11th round stoppage in the undercard to the main bout Saturday, could be right in suggesting Kyowa had suffered the bigger injury.

Pummeled and punished in the first half of the 12-round title fight, Kyowa was pitifully headed for the dead-end in his title defense.

For one, Kyowa, his face, puffed and bloodied by Mayol's sharp, powerful blows in the early rounds, could barely see his foe with his badly damaged right eye.

* * *

Until yesterday, however, it was a puzzle to many how and why Mayol failed to show up in the seventh round.

No, Mayol was actually seen there inside the ring, but at that point it was already a dumb, confused born-loser who was doing the crown chase against the resurgent champion.

Suddenly gone was the splendid and gutsy warrior who had never lost in all 22 previous bouts.

Anyway, what made Mayol's defeat doubly tragic was the fact that, contrary to initial suggestions, he did not even have to surpass himself.

In dominating Kyowa in the first half of the bout, Mayol was just being his usual strong, sharp self.

Yes, the world title, well within grasp, could only be a couple of good rounds away.

In short, Mayol had reached the bridge after Kyowa failed to solve the challenger's fiery assault.

* * *

All Mayol had to do was cross over and that would be it. What followed instead was a monumental fold-up.

Mayol suddenly turned tentative, missed his step, lost steam and started groping like someone suddenly stricken silly by motion sickness.

He no longer knew where he was headed.

All the right things he had done in the first six rounds were reduced to garbage starting the seventh, before he allowed himself to be hacked with a killer right in the final round.

At least he salvaged a descent defeat on points, despite being floored in the final round.

Whether that decking was caused by a push or a valid punch was beside the point.

What inevitably became clear was that Mayol, contrary to what he had bragged, was not at peak form. He was not properly prepared. He had played hooky during the Holy Week break, while his trainer holidayed in nearby Bohol.

They could say he was only half ready, but it would not be right to buy that line. Mayol claimed he had trained hardest, and sparred over a hundred rounds.

But he was evidently not even half ready. Otherwise, he would have not ended up behaving sick and throwing garbage the crucial closing rounds.

There was a breakdown in the training system, as confirmed by reliable sources.

Maybe his manager had been overly sweet and kind to members of Team Mayol, to the trainer mainly.

But Mayol must be taught to mature, now.

After his manager had gullibly allowed Mayol to come in only half-baked for the crown chase, he must also start looking for a new cook, quick please.

Jackson no longer comfy in Phoenix

PHOENIX—THE LAST TIME PHIL JACKSON coached a game this big, in this building now known as US Airways Center, his Chicago Bulls clinched their third consecutive championship with a victory in Game 6 of the 1993 NBA Finals.

"For me personally, it's a comfortable arena to have to come and play in," Jackson said before the Lakers took the court Saturday for Game 7 of their Western Conference first-round series. "But we'll see how the players react to it."

They reacted worse than Jackson could have ever imagined, even for the youngest team in the NBA playoffs. The Lakers were a one-man team in the first half that didn't know if it was coming or going on defense.

BRYANT REUTERS

The Suns led by 17 points after the first quarter and the Lakers stayed in the game, at least marginally, with Kobe Bryant scoring 23 of their 45 points in the first half. Bryant took only three shots, however, in the second half and scored just one more point.

"It's a shame we couldn't give them a game today," Jackson said, "and make the series that it was memorable in the seventh game. You could see early on that things were going to be a little bit strained for us this game."

"The first five minutes of the game on, it seemed like they were a step quicker and a step better offensively and defensively."

At least there was some gallows humor in the 31-point loss. Jackson said one of his assistant coaches told him to tell the reporters in the interview room that the Lakers got "screwed by the officials" and that was why they lost.

The box score showed the truth. Phoenix shot 61 percent and outscored LA, 48-38, in the paint.

"We've got bigger fish to fry now," Suns guard Raja Bell said, taking one last verbal swipe at Bryant. *NY Times News Service*

COMEBACK COMPLETE

Suns boot out listless LA Lakers

PHOENIX, ARIZONA—SO MUCH FOR THE NAIL-BITING suspense of a Game 7. The fast, feisty Phoenix Suns won in a 121-90 laugher over the listless Los Angeles Lakers on Saturday night.

Leandro Barbosa scored a playoff career-high 26 points as Phoenix completed their comeback in the seventh game of their first-round series.

Boris Diaw added 21 points and Shawn Marion had 14 and 10 rebounds for the second-seeded Suns on Saturday, who became just the eighth team in National Basketball Association history to rally from a 3-1 series deficit.

"We realized that when we were down 3-1 we were still close to being up in the series and that we hadn't even played well," Suns MVP Steve Nash said. "Then we started to get some breaks."

Following a 114-97 win in game five that prolonged the series, the Suns gained even more momentum in a 126-118 overtime triumph in game six.

Tim Thomas hit a three-pointer with 6.2 seconds left in regulation to send the sixth game into overtime.

Back in front of their home fans, the Suns overwhelmed the seventh-seeded Lakers in the decisive game, never trailing and leading by as many as 33 points.

Kobe Bryant tried to keep the Lakers in it in the first half by scoring 23 points on eight-of-13 shooting. The league's leading scorer, Bryant netted 50 points in game six.

But in a puzzling disappearing act, Bryant deferred to his teammates in the second half Saturday, taking just three shots and scoring one point on a technical free throw.

Through the first four games of the series, Bryant had been giving more responsibility to his oft-maligned supporting cast.

Bryant attempted 35 shots in game six, but looked like he quit on his teammates in their biggest game of the season.

"Did he score in the second half?" Lakers coach Phil Jackson asked reporters after the game.

Former NBA all-star Charles Barkley accused Bryant of trying to make his teammates look bad.

"He was being selfish," Barkley said of Bryant. "He wanted to prove (to his teammates) you guys can't do anything without me. He doesn't want to take any blame."

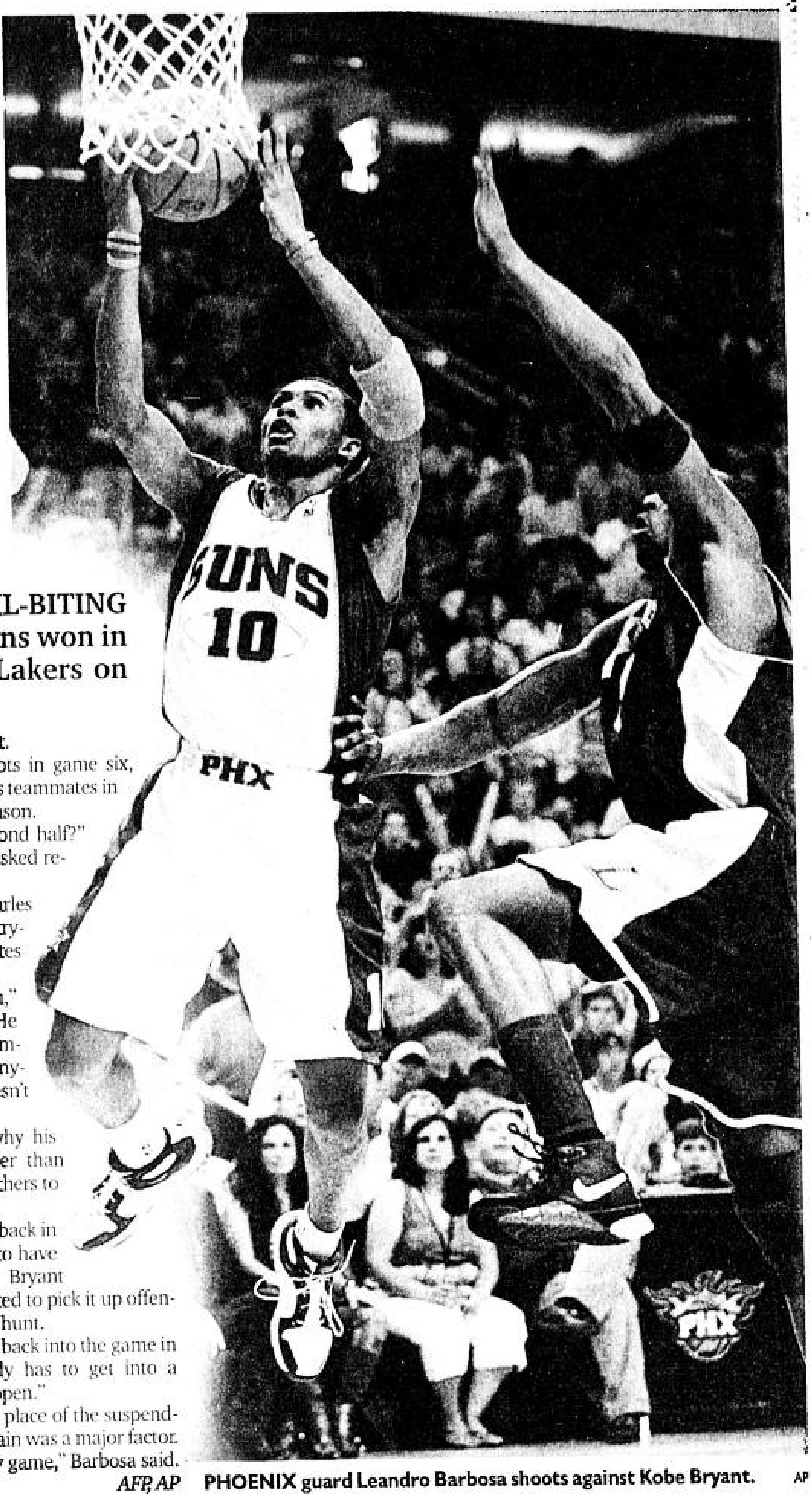
Bryant didn't explain why his offensive disappeared other than to say he was looking for others to produce as well.

"If we were going to get back in this type of game we had to have everybody contributing," Bryant said. "In the first half I started to pick it up offensively just to keep us in the hunt.

"If we were going to get back into the game in the second half everybody has to get into a rhythm and that didn't happen."

Barbosa, who started in place of the suspended Raja Bell in Game 6, again was a major factor.

"I think I figured out my game," Barbosa said. *AFP, AP*


PHOENIX guard Leandro Barbosa shoots against Kobe Bryant. AP

Almazan tops table tennis tilt

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES VETERAN JOJO ALMAZAN SUBDUED Michael Motel of Cebu, 11-10, 11-5, 11-6, 5-11, 11-6, late Saturday to cop the men's singles title of the Tatap-National Selection Table Tennis Championships at the SM Manila mall. Almazan, who saw action in the 2003 Vietnam SEA Games but failed to make the national squad in the 2005 Games, banked on his experience against his 18-year-old foe to bag the crown. Almazan had earlier beaten Motel's elder brother Emmanuel, 11-5, 11-8, 11-1, 11-3, in the semifinals of the tournament sponsored by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Sports Central and SM Manila mall. An engineering student at the University of Visayas, the younger Motel did not leave empty-handed after rolling back San Beda's Gaylor Villar, 11-6, 7-11, 11-7, 11-6, 8-11, 11-9, to bag the men's under-20 title. Almazan also beat Motel in the eliminations of the event also supported by the Philippine Sports Commission and the Manila Sports Council.

Dela Cruz leads SM tilt winners

CHRISTIAN AL DELA CRUZ AND BERNARD ROMERO TOPPLED THEIR RIvals to rule their respective divisions in taekwondo competitions of the SM summer sports tour at SM Molino last week. Dela Cruz defeated Ken Benedict Cabada to capture the middleweight crown in the junior men's division of the advance category, while Romero bested Edmundo Maano Jr. to pocket the grade school boys advance plum. Other winners in the grade school boys' advance class were Joshua Villanueva of RFC Molino and Clyde Batangan of Las Piñas, who beat Jovy Caina and Norrice Durana, respectively. Peter John Olea of SFAC/PNU took the mid junior men's crown (novice) with a victory over teammate Hassan Al-Shiek. Other sports on tap in the SM summer tour are wushu and football. Meanwhile, action in the weekly event resumes on May 9-10 at SM Lucena with wushu competitions slated at SM Bicutan today and tomorrow and football set at SM Batangas on May 9-10.

SCHUMACHER

Schumacher tops home GP

NUERBURGRING, GERMANY—FERrari's Michael Schumacher won his home European Grand Prix on Sunday to prove the doubters wrong and put himself firmly back on the title trail.

Roared on by an ecstatic crowd of red-shirted German supporters, the seven times champion saw off Renault's Fernando Alonso to celebrate a record 86th victory of his career and second in a row.

Alonso, the 24-year-old champion, finished second and saw his overall lead over Schumacher cut to 13 points after five races.

The Spaniard has 44 points to Schumacher's 31. McLaren's Kimi Raikkonen has 23.

Those who had suggested that the 37-year-old German's victory at Imola two weeks ago was merely a Ferrari flash in the pan at their home circuit had to eat their words in the Nuerburgring sunshine.

Schumacher finished 3.7 seconds clear of Alonso and saluted his fans with a raised fist on the victory lap. Brazilian team mate Felipe Massa was third for the first podium finish of his 58-race career.

McLaren, the team Alonso had flagged as his main rivals and that he is joining next season, were never truly in the reckoning even if Raikkonen overcame his German jinx to secure a close fourth place in Massa's slipstream.

Brazilian Rubens Barrichello was fifth for Honda, ahead of Alonso's teammate Giancarlo Fisichella. *Reuters*

NBC hoops: Pangasinan halts Pagadian

PAGADIAN CITY—PANGASINAN HUNDRED Islands waxed hot from start to finish to stop Pagadian's four-game winning streak 81-74, in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the city gym here.

The Hundred Islands of the Pangasinan Amateur League led by its president Mayor Hernani Braganza and team manager Rosendo So thus improved to 2-5.

The Explorers suffered their third loss in seven games in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

The scores:

PANGASINAN 81—Re. Menor 16, Aquino 14, Lopez 11, Yambao 9, Yco 8, Tiongson 6, Ro. Menor 4, Ruiz 4, Balares 4, Tolentino 2, Zagala 0, Codamon 0, Marzan 0, Cortel 0.

PAGADIAN 74—Naron 22, Gatumbato 15, Salud 10, Isidro 6, Daja 6, Ayuk 3, Singidas 3, Quilo 3, Flores 3, Abang 1, Singco 0, Pamaran 0, Lanutan 0, Omandam 0.

Quarters: 25-19, 46-37, 62-55, 81-74

A dream comes true for a hero and his horse

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY—A HERO AND his horse won the Kentucky Derby on Saturday.

Undefeated Barbaro stormed into the lead at the top of the stretch and won convincingly—by 6 1/2 lengths—to give trainer Michael Matz his first Kentucky Derby victory and jockey Edgar Prado his first winning ride.

Matz' joyous day came nearly 17 years after he led three children to safety following a fiery plane crash into a Midwestern American cornfield.

The two brothers and their sister are now grown and joined Matz in the grandstand at Churchill Downs, where they cheered the strapping bay colt onto his sixth consecutive win.

Given a masterful ride by Prado, Barbaro beat a full field of 20 three-year-olds—considered one of the toughest in years for the first leg of the US thoroughbred Triple Crown.

With Sinister Minister and Keyed Entry setting the pace, Barbaro settled in right behind and made his move around the far turn, just as he had in winning his first five races.

The Florida Derby winner, making his first start in five weeks, easily beat Bluegrass Cat to the finish.

Steppenwolfer was third, and there was a dead heat for fourth between Brother Derek and Jazil.

Barbaro becomes the sixth undefeated winner, following Smarty Jones in 2004.

BARBARO, with jockey Edgar Prado in the irons, races to the Kentucky Derby finish line. Jennifer Love Hewitt (upper right) and supermodel Petra Nemcova (lower right) were among the second largest crowd in Churchill Downs history.

Sent off as the 6-1 second choice by the crowd of 157,536—the second largest in Kentucky Derby history—Barbaro covered the 2 kilometers (1 1/4 miles) in 2 minutes, 1.36 seconds, well off Secretariat's record of 1:59 2/5 in 1973.

The son of Dynaformer, owned by Gretchen and Roy Jackson's Lael Farm, returned $14.20 to win on a $2 wager.

Sweetnorthernsaint, the surprise 5-1 favorite, finished seventh. Lawyer Ron finished 12th.

Barbaro overcame a scary start, when he stumbled briefly but quickly righted himself. By the first turn, he was racing among the leaders.

"This is a very excellent horse," Prado said. "All the time he showed me the quality horse he is. Dreams come true."

The margin of victory was the largest since Assault won by eight lengths in 1946.

The 55-year-old Matz left the equestrian world to train thoroughbreds eight years ago and took an unconventional route to his first Derby. Barbaro won the Holy Bull Stakes at Gulfstream Park on Feb. 4 in his first start on the dirt.

With the win, Barbaro became the first horse since Needles in 1956 to win without a prep race four or more weeks before the Derby.

Matz also became the fourth straight first-time Derby trainer to win the race, following John Shirreffs with Giacomo, John Servis with Smarty Jones and Barclay Tagg with Funny Cide.

Showing Up was sixth, followed by Sweetnorthernsaint, Deputy Glitters, Point Determined, Seaside Retreat, Storm Treasure, Lawyer Ron, Cause to Believe, Flashy Bull, Private Vow, Sinister Minister, Bob and John, AP Warrior, Sharp Humor and Keyed Entry.

If Barbaro goes on to win the Preakness in two weeks, the stage would be set for a fourth Triple Crown try in the past five years at the Belmont Stakes on June 10. War Emblem in 2002, Funny Cide in '03 and Smarty Jones in '04 each won the Derby and Preakness, but came up short in the last race. *AP*

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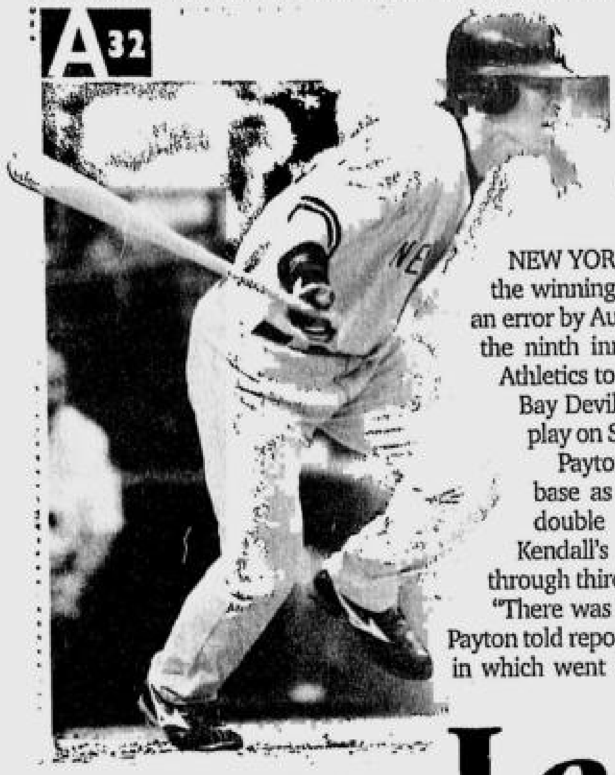


NEW YORK Yankee Hideki Matsui follows through on a ground ball hit off Texas Rangers pitcher Kameron Loe during the first inning. AP

Payton stars as A's freeze Devil Rays

NEW YORK—JAY PAYTON SCORED the winning run from second base on an error by Aubrey Huff in the bottom of the ninth inning to lead the Oakland Athletics to a 3-2 win over the Tampa Bay Devil Rays in American League play on Saturday.

Payton stayed safe at second base as the A's hit into a strange double play just before Jason Kendall's routine grounder went through third baseman Huff's legs.

"There was nothing I could do there," Payton told reporters about the strange play in which went to third base on a ground ball, then scampered back to second to avoid a triple play.

"I guess we were lucky there was no triple play there. The bottom line is, you always wait until the umpire rules," he added.

Two A's then wound up standing at second base before the umpire ruled Payton was safe and there were two outs on the play.

Four pitches later, Kendall's grounder led to Huff's error and Payton made it home from second with the winning run.

"This is a tough game to describe," A's manager Ken Macha said. "We had the 'What's on second, who's on first' kind of thing. I don't think this is in any textbook on how to win."

It was an important win for the A's (16-14), who moved to within ½ game of first place Texas in the AL West.

Barry Zito pitched seven strong innings for the A's, allowing one run on five hits, striking out three and walking one. Justin Duchscherer pitched the eighth and Joe Kennedy (2-0) escaped a bases-loaded jam in the ninth to get the win.

Chad Orvella (1-3) was tagged with the loss, despite giving up just one unearned run on one hit in one inning or relief.

Starter Seth McClung pitched 6 1/3 solid innings.

In Boston, Tim Wakefield pitched six strong innings as the Red Sox beat the Baltimore Orioles for the 10th straight time, 9-3.

Wakefield (2-4) allowed three runs on seven hits with three strikeouts and two walks.

Manny Ramirez homered and drove in two runs and Willy Mo Pena and Alex Gonzalez had two hits each and drove in two runs for Boston, who stayed tied for first in the AL East with the New York Yankees.

In Arlington, Shawn Chacon won his fourth game and Alex Rodriguez hit a three-run homer as the Yankees beat the Texas Rangers, 6-1.

Jason Giambi also homered for New York. *Reuters*

Last word is 'Golden'

De La Hoya silences foul-mouthed Mayorga

LAS VEGAS—THE GOLDEN Boy still has the luster.

Oscar De La Hoya made an impressive return to the ring after a 20-month absence, emphatically stopping Ricardo Mayorga in the sixth round to claim the WBC's 154-pound title on Saturday night.

"This ranks right up there in my top five," De La Hoya said. "Just the fact that he talked so much, even about my wife. The message was I am going to stand up to the bully."

Showing no signs of rust or reluctance, the 33-year-old De La Hoya was a whirlwind in what he claims will be the penultimate fight of his storied career, which includes an Olympic gold medal, titles in six weight classes and a promotions company in his business empire.

De La Hoya (38-4, 30 KOs) clearly hadn't lost his passion for the ring since Bernard Hopkins stopped him in the ninth round with a devastating body punch in September 2004. He overwhelmed Mayorga with clinical right hands and a handful of devastating left hooks, stalking him around the ring and controlling nearly every moment of the fight.

He sent Mayorga to the canvas just 60 seconds in, artfully ducking a wild punch and responding with a strong right and a brutal left hook. The crowd stood, and De La Hoya cast a disdainful glance over his shoulder as he walked to the neutral corner.

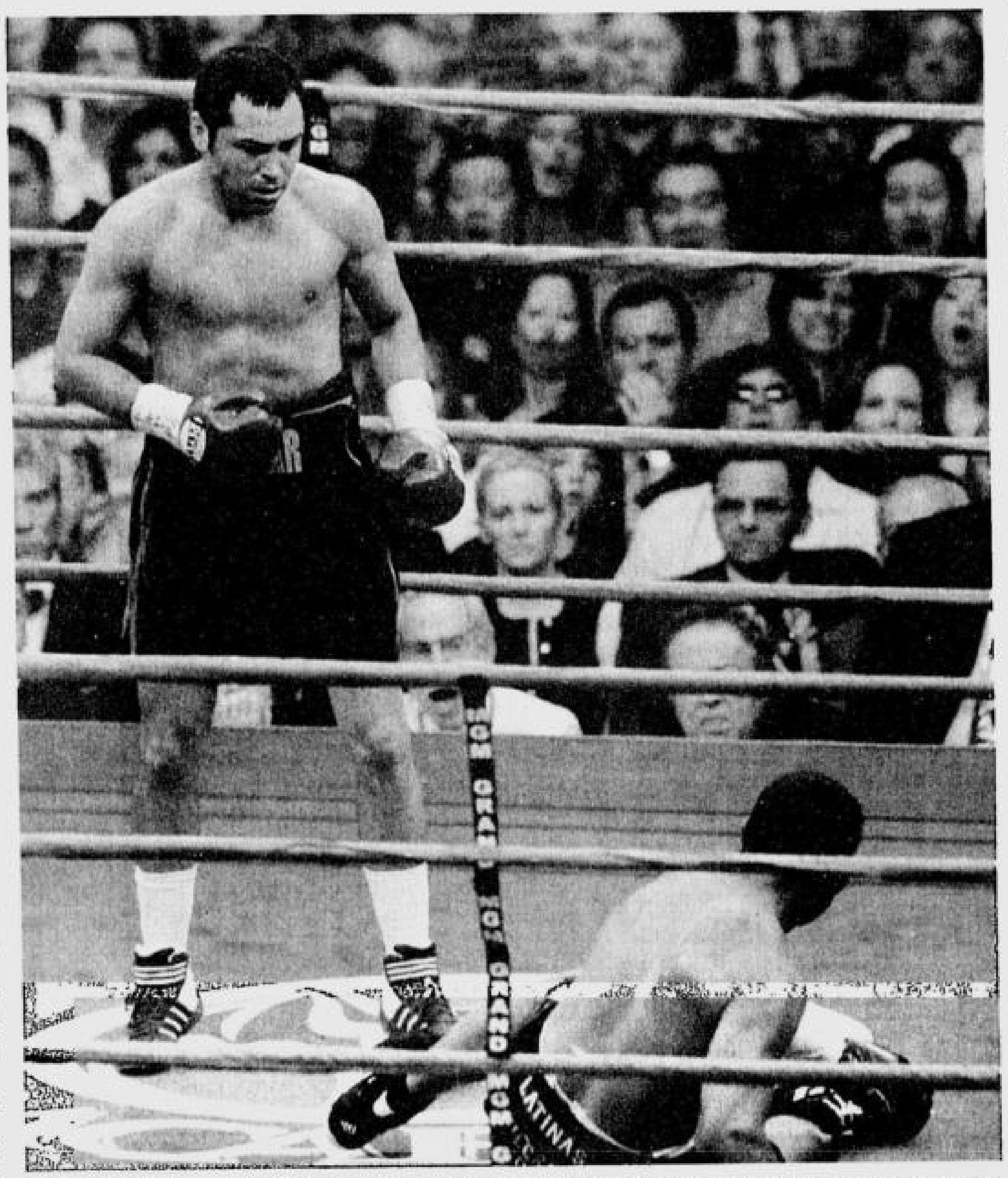
The fight got no better for Mayorga (27-6-1), with De La Hoya's tactical precision and surprising power taking a quick toll.

De La Hoya knocked him down again in the sixth, and a glassy-eyed Mayorga stayed on his wobbly feet before finally going down at 1:25 of the sixth.

De La Hoya chose Mayorga as his comeback opponent partly because of the chain-smoking, beer-swilling Nicaraguan's reputation for reckless behavior. During their pre-fight publicity tour, El Matador wore bullfighting outfits and repeatedly insulted his opponent, questioning everything from his heritage to his sexuality.

"You are a great champion," Mayorga said to De La Hoya. "You are a great fighter. I apologize for everything I said to you."

"I forgive you," De La Hoya replied.



OSCAR De La Hoya (left) flattens Ricardo Mayorga right in the first round. Long in the receiving end of Mayorga's verbal Barbs, De La Hoya let his fists do the talking in the ring. REUTERS

In Worcester, Massachusetts, US challenger Jose Rivera knocked down champion Alejandro Garcia five times on the way to taking the Mexican's World Boxing Association light middleweight crown here Saturday.

The unanimous 12-round verdict went to Rivera by scores of 114-107, 116-106 and 116-106. *AP, AFP*

Ramirez jumps gun on Coseteng

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—KOOKIE Ramirez of Petron Ultron-SRA stunned defending champion Jody Coseteng twice in the kickoff yesterday of the 2006 San Mig Coffee-Petron Blaze Cup of the Philippine Touring Car Championship 2006 at the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

RAMIREZ

Ramirez's new Honda EK proved too quick as he recorded the fastest lap of 1:52.672 seconds in the third to pull away from the pack for good in the morning race.

He completed the 12-lap race in 20 minutes, 45.586 seconds, a comfortable 2.370 seconds ahead of Coseteng (20:47.956).

Carlos Anton of MP Turbo finished third in 21:04.026 while Louie Ramirez of Petron Ultron-SRA and Dominic Bon checked in fourth and fifth, respectively.

Coseteng of San Miguel Beer-Erg Alcotonic took the lead in the afternoon race but Ramirez forged in front to stay in the seventh lap.

Don Pastor settled for third place while Louis Ramirez and Carlos Anton checked in fourth and fifth in the second race of the series sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines and sponsored by San Miguel Corporation, Petron, TNT, Gerry's Grill, Rota, Bendix, Starbright Bodykits, SIR, Gadgets, KTC Tools, Rayban, The Philippine Star, 97.9 Home Radio, 92.3 Joey FM, 99.5 RT, and autoindustriya.com.

National age-group golf finals Tuesday

SIXTY-THREE BOYS AND GIRLS from all over the country vie for honors in four different categories in the finals of the DHL-WWWExpress National Age Group finals starting Tuesday at the Villamor Golf Club course.

The select field comprises qualifiers of a nationwide elimination series jointly conducted by the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines and National Golf Association of the Philippines that had stopovers at The Orchard, Pueblo de Oro in Cagayan de Oro, Marapara in Bacolod and Camp John Hay in Baguio.

Tomorrow is the official practice round and opening ceremonies where hitting of ceremonial balls will be made by Transportation and Communications Secretary Larry Mendoza, who is also NGAP president; DHL-WWWExpress president Joe Feliciano, DHL country manager Larry Llamson, Jungolf president Bang Mamaril and VGC general manager Bert Sabularse.

Scheduled for Tuesday is the stroke-play qualifying round which will also serve as the seeding round. The match play starts Wednesday and the finals on Thursday afternoon.

Heading the Class A field in the tourney are Miko Yee and the long-hitting Gino Bunyi, Marcel Puyat is favored in Class B and Maan Legaspi in girls Class C.

Stanford pads lead to 4 shots with 66

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE—ANgela Stanford shot a 6-under par 66 Saturday, building a four-shot lead after three rounds at the Franklin American Mortgage Championship.

Stanford entered the day ahead by one stroke at Vanderbilt Legends Club's Ironhorse Course. She responded with 27 putts in a seven-birdie, one-bogey round that featured five straight birdies to put her at 18-under 198.

Now the woman who led from the first round in winning her only other title in 2003 can join Annika Sorenstam and Lorena Ochoa in that category this year.

"She's known to play well from start to end," Pat Hurst said.

Cristie Kerr (66) and Sophie Gustafson (68) were tied at 202. Hurst, who won on this course in 2000, was tied at 203 (66) with Patricia Meunier-Lebouc (70) and Ji Yeon Lee (67). *AP*

Wie finishes way out of title hunt in Korea

INCHEON, SOUTH KOREA—MICHELLE WIE shot a 2-over-par 74 Sunday to finish out of title contention at the shortened SK Telecom Open, where she made a cut in a men's tournament for the first time.

The Hawaiian-born teenager had two birdies against four bogeys at the Sky 72 Golf Club course for a three-round, 3-under 213—14 strokes behind winner Prom Meesawat of Thailand (68).

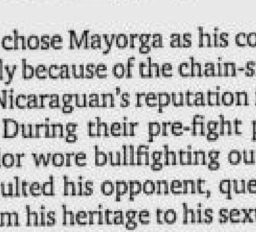
"I did my best, but the result was not as satisfying as I would have liked," Wie said after her final round. "But the most important thing is that I tried my best.

"It just didn't really go the way I wanted today," she said.

Filipino Angelo Que fired a second straight 70 and finished in a tie for ninth to 16th places with a three-round aggregate of 7 under, eight shots off the lead.

Que took home $10,885 for his efforts.

Indian Jeev Milkha and Lee Seung-ho of South Korea shot final rounds of 70 to share second place at 12-under, one stroke ahead of defending champion KJ Choi (65). *AP*



MICHELLE Wie reacts after making a birdie on the second hole. REUTERS

World Cup 2006: US finally stands tall; intimidates opponents

NEW YORK—AMERICAN SOCCER PLAYers finally are larger than life.

A 21.5-meter (70 1/2-foot) Nike billboard in New York and a nearly identical 12-meter (40-foot) ad overlooking San Francisco's Union Square show Eddie Johnson, Landon Donovan and DaMarcus Beasley and proclaim in huge yellow letters: "THE WORLD NO LONGER WANTS TO PLAY US."

While the Americans are ranked fourth in the world by Fifa, trailing only defending champion Brazil, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, that statement seems a bit cocky.

"Maybe some guys were looking at that ranking a little bit too seriously," goalkeeper Kasey Keller said after a 4-1 loss at Germany in a friendly in March.

Four years ago, the Americans lost to Germany 1-0 in the quarterfinals, their best World Cup showing since the first tournament in 1930.

Eleven players return from the 2002 roster, led by Donovan, Beasley, Keller, Claudio Reyna, Brian McBride and Eddie Pope.

Johnson and defender Oguchi Onyewu headline a group of newcomers that makes this US team the strongest ever. But the Americans were drawn into a tough first-round group that includes the Czechs, Italy and Ghana.

And if the United States advances, there's a good chance it would face Brazil in the second round.

"Would I bet that nine times out of 10 we're going to beat Brazil? Probably not," Donovan said. "Could we beat Brazil? Absolutely. So you have to be a little bit realistic, but we want to put ourselves in that situation. And if we're in that situation, I would still be confident."

Arena, who took over as coach after a last-place finish in the 1998 tournament, enters with the longest consecutive tenure among the 32 World Cup coach, PSV Eindhoven's Beasley and the Los Angeles Galaxy's Donovan key the midfield, where Colorado's Pablo Mastroeni could be a holding midfielder. In alternative formations, New England's Clint Dempsey could start in the midfield, too, and Donovan could be pushed up to forward.

McBride, who had nine Premier League goals for Fulham heading into his club's final game, is the leading forward, and could be joined by the 22-year-old Johnson or Josh Wolff, who both play for Kansas City, or Houston's Brian Ching, chosen for the last forward spot over Major League Soccer Most Valuable Player Taylor Twellman of New England.

When the tournament starts, Donovan and Beasley will both be 24. They helped turn around the attitude of a team that viewed itself as a perennial underdog.

"I think from a mental aspect we're pretty fearless when we play," Donovan said. "When we play at the international level, and I think we both really believe that when we're playing, we're better than the other people on the other team, and we're going to beat the other team."

Meanwhile, retired national team defenders Alexi Lalas and Carla Overbeck were voted into the US Soccer Hall of Fame here Saturday, each reaching the honor shrine in their first year of eligibility.

Lalas, named on 95 of 113 ballots, and Overbeck, who received 85 votes, will be inducted to the Hall here at an Aug. 28 ceremony.

Now the president and general manager of Major League Soccer champion Los Angeles Galaxy, Lalas was a member of the 1994 and 1998 US World Cup teams and the 1992 US Olympic squad. *AP*

Furyk gives himself yet another chance

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA—STUNG by a playoff loss a year ago and frustrated by two close calls this year, Jim Furyk earned another shot at winning Saturday by taking advantage of a rain-softened course for a 68 and a one-shot lead in the Wachovia Championship.

Furyk, the only player to shoot in the 60s each day this week, got the separation he needed with an approach that landed softly and rolled within 2 feet on the 16th hole, then finished with solid pars to reach 11-under 205.

"I'm happy with the way I played," Furyk said. "I'm happy to be out front at this point. I've got another round of golf tomorrow and I need to attack the golf course again."

Retief Goosen made seven birdies on the back nine and was thrilled to escape with a bogey on the 18th hole after driving into the creek that meanders down the left side of the fairway. That gave him a 65 and left him one shot behind, along with fellow South African Trevor Immelman, who birdied the 18th for a 66.

Bo Van Pelt had a three-shot lead going into the third round, but he shot a 73 that allowed several players into the mix.

A year ago, Furyk closed with a 66 and to reach a three-man playoff. After Sergio Garcia was quickly eliminated, Furyk twice had good birdie chances to win, then hit into the creek on the 18th as Vijay Singh won with a par.

Furyk's last tournament was at Hilton Head, where he lost a two-shot lead on the back nine to Aaron Baddeley. *AP*

KRISTIA Ricana returns a volley as partner Kathy Sotejo rushes to the net in Petron beach volley finals at the Manila Baywalk. ERIK ARAZAS

PUP tossers take Petron title

KRISTIA RICANA AND NEW PARTNER KATHY SOTEJO GOT THEIR rhythm back in the nick of time to nail the second leg title of the 2006 Petron Beach Volleyball Championship at the Manila Baywalk.

The pair from Polytechnic University of the Philippines pulled off a 21-14, 19-21, 15-13 triumph over Asian College of Science and Technology's Lorna de la Cruz and Chariza Castro in the beach volley festival backed by Petron and the Manila Sports Council.

"*Nawala ang* rhythm *namin noong* (We lost our rhythm in the) second set," said the 19-year-old Ricana. "*Pero sa* (But in the) third, we got back our game."

De la Cruz and Castro, who also claimed runner-up honors in the first leg at the Clearwater Country Club in Clark Field, Pampanga, came charging back from an 11-17 deficit to tie the count at 17 and forge the deciding set.

Ricana and Sotejo earlier topped Group B with three straight wins in the quarterly Petron volley series also backed by ACSAT, Speedo (official outfitter), Mikasa (official ball) and Action and Fitness Magazine.

They earned the first finals seat after stopping Sheena Teves and Khate Borja, also of Acsat, 21-8.

Speedo import-export manager Dharmendra Gupta awarded the trophies and prizes to the winners.

Next racing czar should know his ABC

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH THE REPORT that President Macapagal-Arroyo is set to name retired police Chief Supt. Florencio Finanza as head of the Philippine Racing Commission, nor with the talk in racing circles that the camp of the President's son Rep. Mikey Arroyo, who is a horse owner himself, did have a big say in choosing the successor to former Philracom chair Jaime Dilag.

There is nothing wrong with that as long as the new racing czar genuinely loves and understands the sport.

It's time the Philracom is headed by someone who really cares for the industry and not just anybody who could some day throw his weight around because of his closeness to the powers-that-be. What the Philracom badly needs at the moment is a leader of good moral character, one who is transparent, fearless and honest; and one who could raise the level of public confidence in horseracing.

The image of horseracing has been tainted by cases of graft and corruption and whisperings of fixed races. Years of good work are wasted as a result. The Philracom should always be spotlessly clean; its board should be composed of people who cannot be coerced by powerful and influential people, including those from the government.

"Nowadays, Philippine horseracing is not healthy," said a concerned horse owner. "It will not prosper if we continue to be complacent. The time is ripe for the Philracom to adopt genuine reforms to develop, promote and protect the racing industry. It should be run by a professional manager."

For starters, the Philracom's executive director, who holds a career position, should be receiving more than the reported monthly take-home pay of P25,000. He deserves more than that. On the other hand, the Philracom chair and the racing commissioners should not be horse owners themselves, or if they are horse owners, should divest ownership of their horses to avoid a conflict of interest.

The new Philracom could also take off on a bright note by holding a long-overdue summit among the direct players of the industry—the horse owners-breeders, jockeys, trainers and officials of both the Manila Jockey Club and Philippine Racing Club, operators of the country's only two racing clubs, the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, and the Santa Ana Park in Makati City.

More than providing good leadership, this summit could very well serve as a unifying force for the various sectors of the industry which have often been fragmented and at odds over conflicting parochial interests. The industry could not afford to be divided at this stage of its development.

* * *

ODDS AND ENDS: Some marathoners may lose up to one quart of sweat per hour. Even the best-conditioned athletes are vulnerable to heat. In 1981, legendary runner Alberto Salazar collapsed after setting a record for the men's marathon. His body temperature: 106 degrees Fahrenheit. When it's hot, the body struggles to maintain a healthy temperature of 98.6°F. The additional stress on the heart and blood vessels can trigger heart and other medical problems... Swatch Timing spent about $40 million as the official timekeeper of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. The company—responsible for timing, scoring, distance and height measurements—developed a variety of high-tech devices to ensure everything runs like clockwork. In basketball, for example, the Swatch high-speed video cameras near the baskets can calculate "hang time" on slam dunks. Looking at a digitized video replay, an operator presses one computer key when the player's feet leave the ground and another key when they touch down. The process takes four seconds, allowing the result to be superimposed on the television replay... In the 1932 Los Angeles Games, Olympic officials miscounted laps in the 3,000-meter steeplechase and runners did an extra 400 meters... Before Lydia de Vega-Mercado, Mona Sulaiman was the most-written-about track and field athlete in the history of Philippine sports. She was a three-time Olympian (1960 Rome, 1964 Tokyo and 1968 Mexico) and three-gold medal winner (100 meters, 200m and 4x100m) in the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta. Now a convert to the Catholic faith, the 5-foot-7 native of Cotabato City hogged the headlines way back in 1966 when she refused an obligatory sex test in the Bangkok Asian Games, saying the test was against her Muslim faith. To make matters worse, she claimed some Filipino team officials even neglected her. "I was devastated," said Sulaiman, a management graduate of the Far Eastern University. "It was the saddest chapter in my life." With her big physique, husky voice and masculine looks, Sulaiman's gender was often questioned. Cynics compared her with the controversial Nancy Navalta, but Mona said there was no comparison. "Nancy's case is different," she stressed, adding that she had no hormonal problems.

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[illegible]
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

TWO (2) YEAR RENTAL OF 2 UNITS AIRCON BUSES
FOR
MINDANAO GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION FIELD (MGPF)
EDC 06-034

The approved project cost is P9,216,000.00 to be charged against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is Two (2) years.

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, Fort Bonifacio (c/o N. P. Calling) starting **May 2, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Five Hundred (P500.00).**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **May 11, 2006, 9:00 AM** at PNOC-EDC Davao Logistics Office, Airport Road, Sasa, Davao City.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. on May 24, 2006 (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time)** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI--May 8, 2006)

CENTRAL NEGROS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Bacolod City
Tel. No. (034) 435-3641 - 55 • Fax No. (034) 435-4079

INVITATION TO A PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE AND SEALED BIDDING

Interested parties are hereby invited to a **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** and **SEALED BIDDING** for the **SUPPLY** of the following:

1. THIRTY (30) PCS POWER CAPACITOR, DOUBLE BUSHING 100KVAR, 7620 VOLTS, BIL95KV, 60 HZ SINGLE PHASE, BRAND NEW
2. FIFTEEN (15) PCS. POWER CAPACITOR, DOUBLE BUSHING 150KVAR, 7620 VOLTS, BIL95KV, 60 HZ. SINGLE PHASE, BRAND NEW.
3. STEEL POLES OF VARIOUS SIZES, 30', 35', 75', 80' 85' & 90', HOT DIPPED, GALVANIZED, 100 MICRONS.
4. CONDUCTORS, POLY INSULATED AAC#6; DUPLEX WIRE ACSR#6 & TW WIRE #10
5. SERVICE DEAD END GRIP #6; SPOOL INSULATOR 1 3/8"; COMPRESSION, CONNECTOR 28AU, BURNDY & ROUND METER BASE SOCKET 100 AMP. 1" HUB, 4 JAWS WITH SEALING RING, BRAND G.E. OR ITS EQUIVALENT.

A pre-qualification conference will be held on the following date and time stated below at the 3rd floor, CENECO Main Building, corner Gonzaga & Mabini Streets, Bacolod City, where all other related matters and technical description and specification will be discussed.

ITEM NO.	DATE	TIME
1 & 2	MAY 25, 2006	10:00 A.M.
3	MAY 25, 2006	2:00 P.M.
4 & 5	MAY 26, 2006	10:00 A.M.

Only qualified bidders who were present during the pre-qualification conference will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Sealed bid must be accompanied by Bid Security equivalent to 5% of the total bid price in the form of cash, certified cheque, manager's cheque, or surety bond issued by a surety or insurance company valid for at least one hundred twenty (120) days.

Sealed bids must be received on or before June 13, 2006 for item no. 1, 2 & 3, and on June 14, 2006 for items 4 & 5, 10:00 A.M. at the above address at which time and place the said proposal will be opened and read in the presence of bidder's representative.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the Procurement Section at the 2nd Floor CENECO Main Building, phone No. 435-3641 to 55 local 236.

The Central Negros Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CENECO) hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects or infirmities therein, and to accept such bids as may be deemed advntageous to CENECO.

(Sgd.) NORIEL A. BERMUDEZ
O.I.C. General Manager

(PDI - May 8, 9 & 10, 2006)

Rotary golf grand finals tees off May 10

THE THIRD LEG AND GRAND FINALS of the Rotary International District 3780 annual golf tournament in support of its "Golf for a Cause" program tees off on May 10 at the Tagaytay Midlands.

The 18-hole full handicap stroke play event using the modified Stableford scoring system of scoring is both an individual and team competition with Rotary clubs vying for team supremacy.

At stake is the coveted PDG Jose "Pete" Morales, Jr. Memorial Cup put up by host RC San Francisco del Monte.

Shotgun tee-off will be at 10 a.m.

Hole-in-one prizes include a DS Golf cart, P200,000 cash, an OSIM massage chair, and P50,000 worth of casino chips.

The sponsors: Club Car Turf Co., South Sea Surety and Insurance Co., PCSO, Smart Communications Inc., Citibeds, Asia Brewery, Enriquez Security Services Inc., Fortune Tobacco, Remy Martin, Citibank, American Express, Cathay Land, Direct Link, Argue Law Firm, Reyes, Francisco and Associates Law Office, CPI Energy Companies, SSPI Printing, Westwood Law Firm, Policarpio Pagulayan and Agura Law Office, DGN Bing Licuanan, Points Business and Industrial Services Inc., OTTICA Corp. and Pearl of the Pacific Boracay.

SPORTSWATCH

Tough NCA int'l derby slated at Roligon

THE NATIONAL COCKERS ASSOCIATION (NCA) is in the heat of preparations for its "best international cockfight ever" on May 29, 31 and June 2 at the NCA's new venue at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City. "It will be even better than the first 2006 NCA international derby last January," said Rizal Gov. Casimiro Ynares, Jr. one of the derby hosts. "But what will make this forthcoming event bigger is that members of the NCA have pledged to field more of their very best birds to fight the very best of our guests." Spearheading the vaunted American delegation are Don Gray, Joe Walcott, Larry Whitehead, Eddie Adell, Jerry Douglas, Curt Longfton and Larry Barleta, among others. Aside from Ynares, the derby hosts are Ronnie Puno, Iggy Arroyo, Ito Ynares, JV Magsaysay, Rene Medina, Ric de Guzman and Jun Santiago. Organizers have assured that the derby will be conducted "in the fairest, most transparent and most honest manner, in accordance with time-honored Filipino traditions and values that have always been the pillars of the NCA." Part of the proceeds of NCA derbies will fund the scholarship program established by the association more than a decade ago.

70 fights up at PCAP 5-cocker today

THE BATTLE FOR THE COCKER OF THE YEAR title of the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) resumes at 5 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum via a 5-cock derby featuring 70 fights. Sponsor is B-Meg Derby. Top-rated entries will be fielded by frontrunners Jake Macasaet (San Vicente Ferrer); Butchoy Olano (Ika Mae); Richard Bates and Nicetas Katigbak (Victoria Peak), Lito Orillaza (Golden Syca), boxing hero Manny Pacquiao and Amor Salvanera (Super Pacman), William Co (Spencer), Jimmy Yasay (Rooster Wild), Madlambayan Brothers (JCAP Jimafer Mapalad), Rainier Kau (Kimbee) and M. Badillo (Singkamas Pride MB) and Winchester Gold entry. Meanwhile, the final round of the "Summer Salpukan" 6-cock derby begins on Thursday. Seeing action are participants who have scored 1.0, 1.5 and 2 points. For inquiries, call 896-3545.

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION
FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE SALE OF
VARIOUS SUB-TRANSMISSION LINES/
ASSETS WITHIN THE FRANCHISE AREA
OF SOUTH COTABATO I ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC. (SOCOTECO I)

ERC CASE NO. 2005-293 MC

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION
CORPORATION (TRANSCO).
Applicant.
x-----------------------------------x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing by National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO) on **October 24, 2005** of an application for approval of the sale of various sub-transmission lines/assets involving the amount of **Thirty Five Million Seven Hundred Forty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Sixty Two Pesos and Forty-Two Centavos (PhP35,744,762.42)** within the franchise area of South Cotabato I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SOCOTECO I).

The Commission has set the application for hearing on **May 15, 2006** (Monday) at nine-thirty in the morning (9:30 a.m.) at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing they be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman and the Honorables, **OLIVER B. BUTALID, JESUS N. ALCORDO, RAUF A. TAN** and **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN**, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 29th day of March 2006 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **MARIA TERESA A. RAMIREZ-CASTAÑEDA**
Executive Director III

(PDI - May 8, 2006)

UNDP

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Renovation of Conference Room Located at the DOE – LATL Building for the Linear Fluorescent Lamp and Lamp Ballast Testing Facility and Fabrication of Ageing Test Rack for Linear Fluorescent Lamps ***under the Project "Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Project (PELMATP)"***

The Development Support Services Center (DSSC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to invite local construction companies / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Renovation of Conference Room located at the DOE – LATL Building for the Linear Fluorescent Lamp and Lamp Ballast Testing Facility and Fabrication of Ageing Test Rack for Linear Fluorescent Lamps".

The Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Project (PELMATP) is intended to address the barriers to widespread utilization of energy efficient lighting (EEL) systems in the Philippines. It is aimed at contributing to the realization of the country's sustainable development objectives and its goal in reducing GHG emissions in the energy sector. It will specifically focus on the promotion of EELs energy efficient version of linear fluorescent lamps (i.e., slim tube triphosphor coated), CFLs, high intensity discharge (HID) lamps, ballasts (low loss electromagnetic and electronic) and energy efficient luminaires. The project will accelerate integration of EEL promotion programs to the energy conservation and energy efficiency (EC & EE) programs of the Philippines' Department of Energy (DOE), enhance private sector's involvement and appreciation of the benefits of EELs, and ensure that environmental impacts associated with the widespread use of EELs are mitigated. The project objectives will be achieved with the implementation of specific barrier removal programs that will involve: (1) updating of policies, standards and guidelines on lighting applications; (2) institutional and technical capacity building; (3) consumer education and information dissemination; (4) development and implementation of appropriate financing mechanisms; and (5) mitigating environmental impacts of the widespread utilization of EELs.

Bidding Documents (Requirements for Eligibility, Instructions to Bidders, Terms of Reference and Standard Conditions of Contract) may be secured personally, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Philippine Pesos One Thousand (PhP 1,000.00)** from the following address:

Development Support Services Center
United Nations Development Programme
30th Floor Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Tel. No. (632) 901 0273 / 901 0272
Fax No. (632) 901 0200

International suppliers are encouraged to appoint and authorize Philippine-based counterparts to secure the bidding documents and submit proposals for and in their behalf.

The abovementioned Bidding Documents will be released to all interested parties strictly from **May 8, 2006 to May 12, 2006.** The Bidding Documents shall contain all instructions on the rules, procedures, bid opening dates, and other schedules and requirements.

UNDP reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract to the most advantageous offer to the UNDP based on UNDP criteria. UNDP assumes no obligation or responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made for this Contract.

(Sgd) **ETHELIND B. CAPUNO**
Manager, DSSC

(PDI–May 8, 2006)

HK Olympian sinks Subic rivals

Lee attacks early to claim third crown; Japanese bet rules women's race

By Jasmine W. Payo

SUBIC, ZAMBALES—HONG KONG'S DANIEL Lee Chi-wo felt no need to look over his shoulder.

Lee, the lone Olympian in the elite field, displayed enough confidence and swagger yesterday to dominate the 12th Legenda-Subic Bay International Triathlon here.

"I expected to win," the lean, 29-year-old Lee proudly said after the arduous 1.5K swim-40K bike-10K run competition that started and wound up at the SBMA boardwalk.

Pulling away in the run leg, Lee ruled the race in 2 hours, 3 minutes and 14 seconds for his third victory in the prestigious annual event.

"Everyone stayed together, and I decided to press for the run," said Lee, a veteran of the 2004 Athens Olympics. "I ran pretty well. I started with a constant pace until I was up by nearly a minute."

Second-placer Kodo Hiramatsu of Japan tried to keep up, but was no match in the foot race against Lee.

"His running was better than mine," conceded Hiramatsu of the Hong Kong bet, who also triumphed here in 2000 and 2001.

The 25-year-old Hiramatsu clocked 2:04:10, over a minute ahead of teammate Satoshi Iwata who timed 2:05:43.

Japan did not fall short in the women's division, however, as Satomi Okouchi won with a time of 2:26:37.

The 24-year-old Okouchi pulled away right in the first lap of the run but encountered difficulty negotiating the bike course in the Binictican Heartbreak Hills.

LC Langit came home four minutes behind the Japanese in second spot—the best finish by a Filipino in the competition.

"I was able to keep pace with (Okouchi) in the bike leg because I'm familiar with the course," said Langit. "I tried to keep pace with her (in running), but it was hard."

The 19-year-old Langit, a member of La Salle's swim team, timed 2:30:08, way ahead of third placer and teammate Mimi Lucas (2:38:07).

The Philippines' veteran campaigners, including Southeast Asian Games medalists Sandra Araullo and Ani de Leon, skipped the race due to injuries.

National champion Arland Macasieb surprisingly competed despite a shin injury, but could only muster a 10th place finish in the men's race.

Legend International Resorts CEO Khoo Boo Boon sent off the 245 entries from Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, New Zealand, Austria and the Netherlands.

Perennial teen champions Joash Serrano (1:09:33) and Kim Mangrobang (1:19:05) ruled the junior male and female sprint, while Bonnie Sy (1:23:46) topped the adult sprint. Polo Tri won the team event with a cumulative time of 10:35:23.

JAPAN'S Satomi Okouchi (right) finishes the 1.5km swim leg ahead of the Philippines' Lea Coline Langit in the Legenda-Subic International Triathlon.

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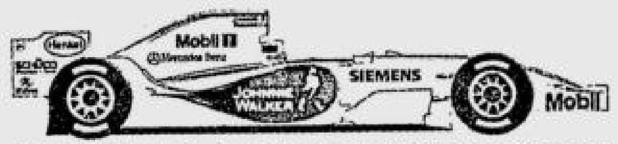
Alonso takes pole in Euro prix

NUERBURGRING, Germany—Renault-Mild Seven's Fernando Alonso was fastest in the qualifying round and took the pole for the European Grand Prix Saturday at the Nuerburgring circuit.

Trailing him at the grid are: 2. Michael Schumacher, Ferrari, 1:30.028; 3. Felipe Massa, Ferrari, 1:30.407; 4. Rubens Barrichello, Honda, 1:30.753; 5. Kimi Raikkonen, McLaren-Mercedes, 1:30.093; 6. Jenson Button, Honda, 1:30.940; 7. Jarno Trulli, Toyota, 1:31.419; 8. Juan Pablo Montoya, McLaren-Mercedes, 1:32.880; 9. Mark Webber, Williams, 1:33.405; 10. Jacques Villeneuve, BMW-Sauber, 1:36.998



TEAM McLAREN MERCEDES
CORPORATE PARTNER

KEEP WALKING
JOHNNIE WALKER.

Shell Makes New Guinness World Record On Fuel Economy
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS CHALLENGE

Shell Fuel Economy World Record Challenge
DA55 SUU

John and Helen Taylor drove to London and completed the Shell Fuel Economy World Record Challenge last April 4, 2006. Together with Shell, they now have a Guinness World Record to their name for the most fuel efficient circumnavigation of the world ever undertaken using a 1.6L Volkswagen Golf FSI, a standard model representative of the cars found on the road today. They achieved this under the strict rules and guidelines set and witnessed by Guinness and were able to deliver using just 24 tanks of the new Shell Fuel Economy Formula.

The Taylors started their great adventure on January 17, 2006 and they returned having covered 28,970 kilometers, across 25 countries in 78 days of driving. The most significant number of all is that they made it using just 1,303 liters of gasoline - a phenomenal feat considering the varied and extreme driving conditions that they have gone through.

During their journey, they drove though the fast lanes of the Autobahn and passed by the Ferrari headquarters in Modena as well as the Danube plains of Austria. They encountered below freezing weather conditions in the snowy mountains of Switzerland and manoeuvred through the treacherous snowstorms on the Czech mountains. They also endured temperatures of 46° Celsius while in the outbacks of Australia and weathered cyclones along the way. Their fuel economy techniques were also tested in the deep basins and valleys of Macedonia and the steep and winding coastal landscape of Greece.

And despite all these, the Taylors together with Shell still managed to set a New Guinness World Record.

Shell, being the exclusive fuel provider for the challenge, was able to road test their newest Fuel Economy gasoline formulation which they plan to introduce to the public in the future. The fuel efficient driving practices learned in the challenge will be added to Shell's "FuelStretch" principles.

"We are committed to delivering better fuels around the world and have been working for a long time now to develop fuels which address motorists' needs for greater fuel economy, and are specifically designed to take drivers further," explains Roger Cracknell, Shell Fuel Economist. "This venture gave us the perfect platform to subject our latest lab work to the ultimate road test. That they've come in at such a incredibly low number of tanks is testament to the new Shell Fuel Economy Formula, and to the principles of fuel efficient/Fuel Stretch driving - that Shell has improved with the help of the Taylors. We're deeply proud of what the achievement represents for the Taylors and our newest formula".

For Shell, the end of this adventure reflects their commitment to customers, literally the day after achieving the record Shell will start to launch the new Shell Fuel Economy Formula to drivers in a number of countries around the world. Shell spokesperson Nick Allen, Global Head of Fuels and Forecourt, comments "In the spirit of the Taylors' accomplishment, we're looking forward to helping everyday drivers around the world to achieve greater fuel efficiency no matter where they live or what they drive -- setting their own personal records."

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**
sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

NANCY Castiglione: Maybe he changed his mind. ROGER MARGALLO

Fast-track screenings for RP 'Idol' start May 12

SINCE THE ONE-DAY AUDITIONS IN Manila for the reality-talent search "Philippine Idol" cannot accommodate all contestants, especially those from northern and southern Luzon, fast-track screenings will be held at satellite offices starting May 12.

This was announced by ABC 5, which is producing the country's version of "American Idol." Manila auditions are set on June 3.

There will only be one Manila audition, and not three as the network announced earlier, according to Terra Daffon, senior vice president for corporate affairs.

"Fast tracks are not official auditions. During fast tracks, contestants submit credentials for validation," Daffon told INQUIRER Entertainment.

The May 12 fast tracks are set at the Pacific Mall in Laoag, Ilocos Norte, SM Lucena in Lucena City and SM Fairview in Quezon City.

May 14—at CSI Malls in San Fernando, La Union and Dagupan, Pangasinan; Mart One in Cagayan and Pacific Mall in Legazpi, Albay.

May 15—SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City and SM San Fernando, Pampanga; May 17—SM Bacoor in Cavite; May 18—SM Dasmariñas, also in Cavite.

May 19—SM Bicutan, Parañaque City; May 26—SM Baguio; May 27—SM Southmall in Las Piñas and SM Sta. Mesa; May 30—SM Valenzuela.

Applicants will be asked to fill up necessary forms and perform a minimum of two songs before a set of judges. Those who pass will each be given a badge and pass for the audition proper. *Marinel R. Cruz*

INSIDE

- **• Life after PBB** A2/7
- **• Which actors deliver in Hollywood?** A2/4
- **• Exit Wyngard Tracy** A2/8

So what's up, John?

By Marinel R. Cruz

NANCY CASTIGLIONE IS CONVINCED THAT "Pinoy Big Brother" ex-celebrity housemate John Prats, who admitted to courting the actress-commercial model while inside the house, has "changed his mind.""

She and John had "bumped into each other a few times" since the "PBB Celebrity Edition" ended in April, Nancy said, but they had not "really sat down and talked" about their erstwhile budding romance.

"We send text messages back and forth; we call each other occasionally. But we haven't discussed what's going to happen [to us]. I'm sure he changed, like I did, when he was inside the house," Nancy told INQUIRER Entertainment on Friday at the launch of the JVC '06 Badminton Open in Makati City.

Before

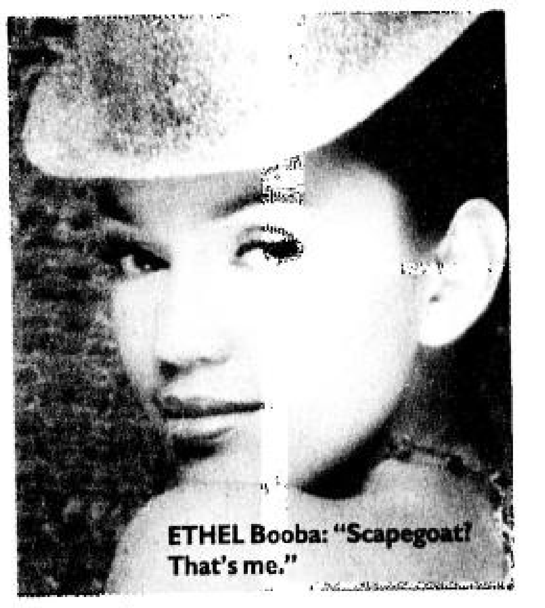
In February, John and Nancy appeared on the show biz talk program "The Buzz," just days before "PBB Celebrity Edition" began. During their interview, John confessed he "liked" Nancy and announced that he had written love letters that were to be handed to her every Friday until he stepped out of Big Brother's house.

Nancy received all of those letters, she told INQUIRER.

In April, when John was booted from the show, the actress again went on "The Buzz" to welcome him back. "We both felt really shy that time," Nancy recalled. "There was still *kilig*, but I think we both realized [right then] that our individual careers were our top priority."

The Fil-Canadian actress continued: "I haven't spoken to him about the issue with Say (Alonzo),

SO WHAT'S/ A2-6



ETHEL Booba: "Scapegoat? That's me."

Ethel Booba: That's unfair

By Nini Valera

ETHEL BOOBA, ONE OF THE HOSTS OF GMA 7's reality show "Extra Challenge," is sore about stories pointing to her as the reason that the top-rating program is has been canceled (last airing is on May 26).

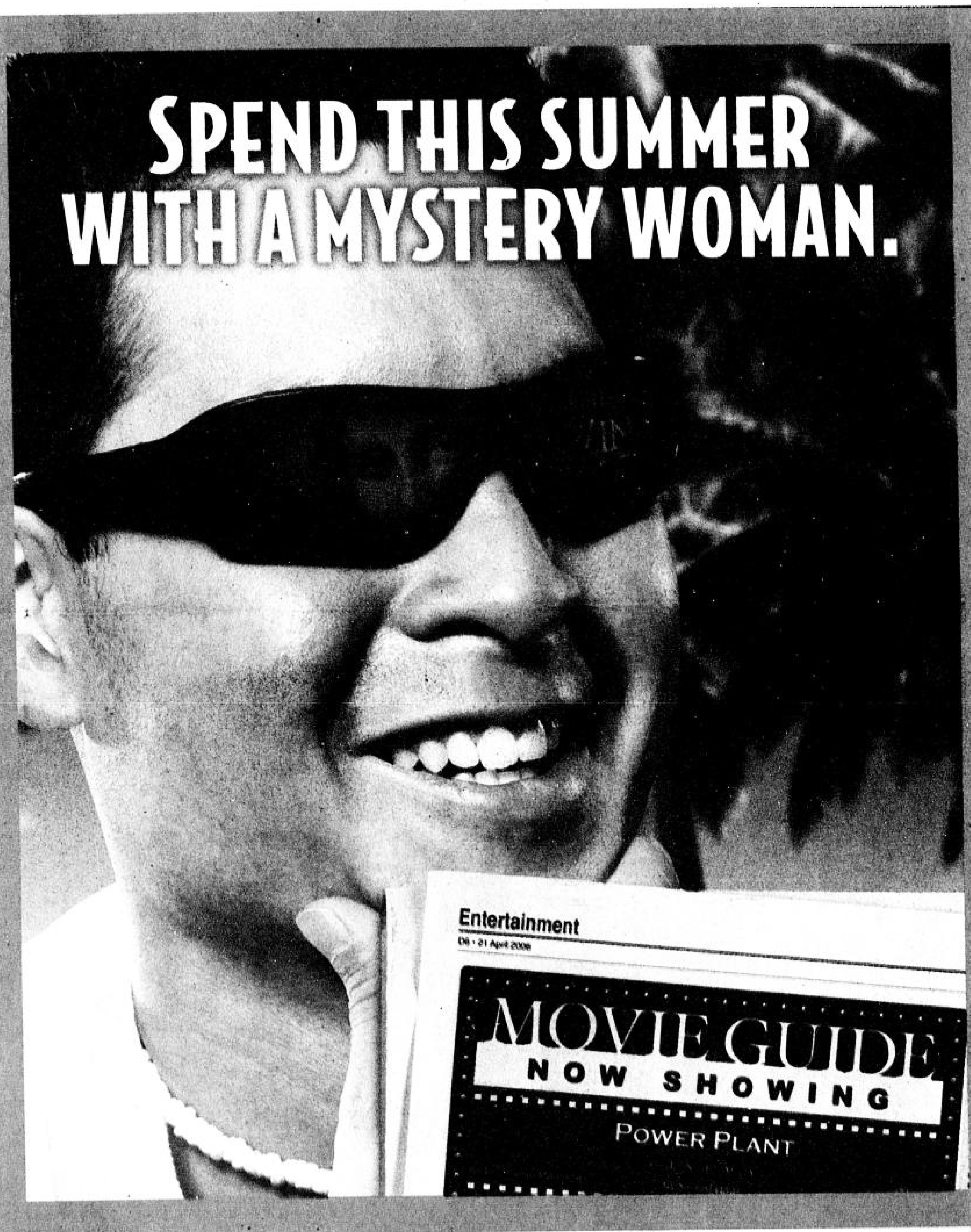
In an exclusive interview with INQUIRER, Ethel, 28, defended herself against the widespread rumor, even as "Jologs Guide," her own show, has also been canceled.

"It's so unfair," a teary-eyed Ethel said, lamenting reports that her scandalous relationship with basketball player Alex Crisano had turned off viewers.

Ethel claimed the show started losing its appeal to her and the rest of the staff when production manager Marge Natividad was terminated last September, for undisclosed reasons.

"She was our mother, and she was gone," Ethel recounted. "She was the one who saw that I could be a host. She always made me do an

ETHEL/ A2-6



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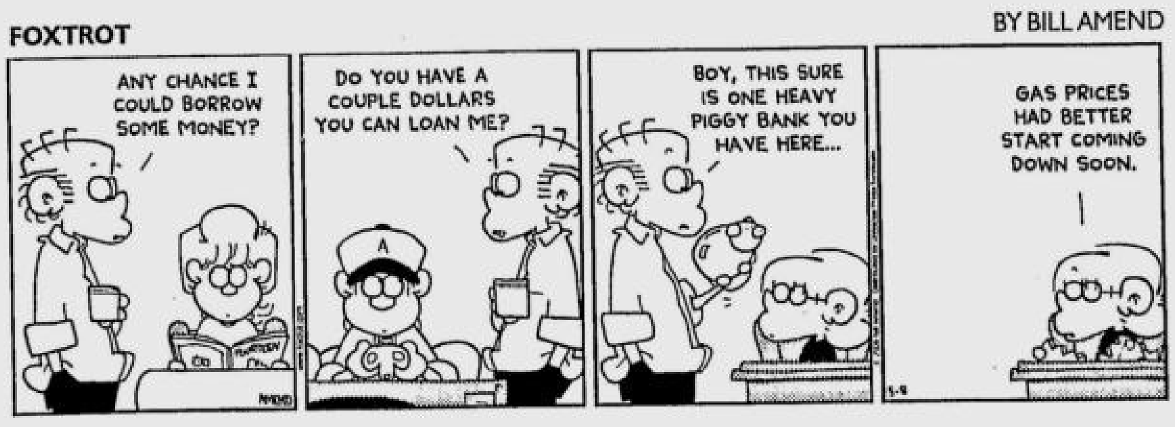
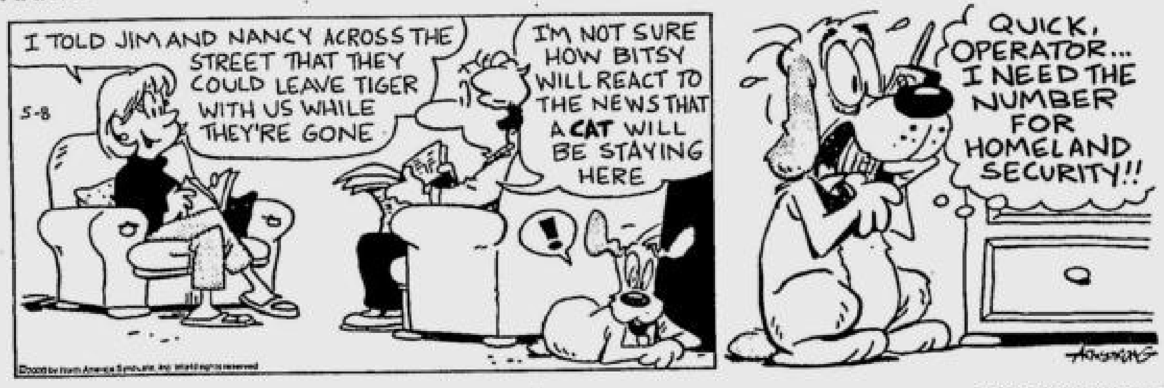
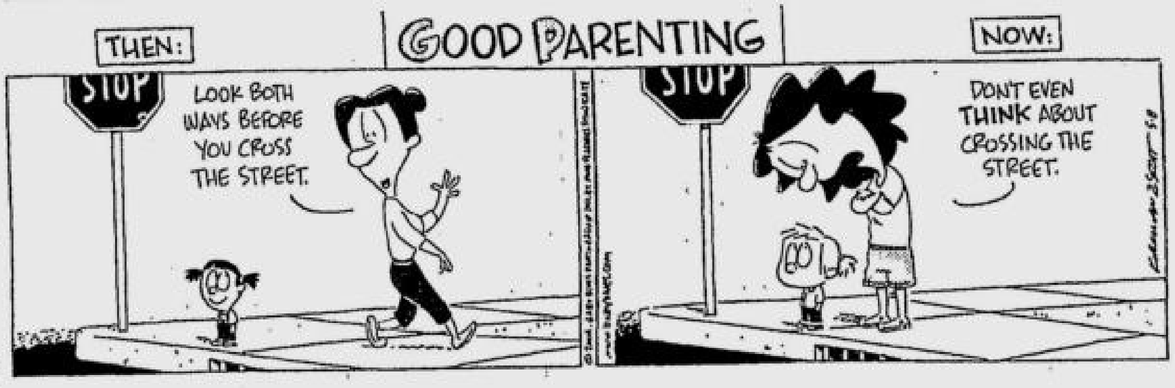
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


ANY CHANCE I COULD BORROW SOME MONEY?
DO YOU HAVE A COUPLE DOLLARS YOU CAN LOAN ME?
BOY, THIS SURE IS ONE HEAVY PIGGY BANK YOU HAVE HERE...
GAS PRICES HAD BETTER START COMING DOWN SOON.
5-8

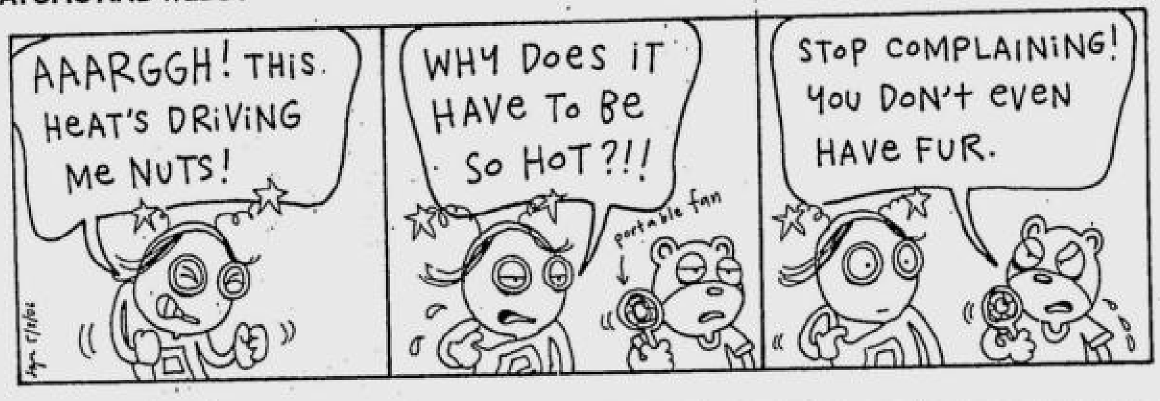
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


5-8
I TOLD JIM AND NANCY ACROSS THE STREET THAT THEY COULD LEAVE TIGER WITH US WHILE THEY'RE GONE
I'M NOT SURE HOW BITSY WILL REACT TO THE NEWS THAT A CAT WILL BE STAYING HERE
!
QUICK, OPERATOR... I NEED THE NUMBER FOR HOMELAND SECURITY!!

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


GOOD PARENTING
THEN:
STOP
LOOK BOTH WAYS BEFORE YOU CROSS THE STREET.
NOW:
STOP
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT CROSSING THE STREET.

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


AAARGGH! THIS HEAT'S DRIVING ME NUTS!
WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE SO HOT?!!
portable fan
STOP COMPLAINING! YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE FUR.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're warm, friendly and sociable. You stay youthful because you're aware of your appearance. (You like to live well.) You value companionship, yet you want freedom. In your early 40s, your progressed Sun moves into Cancer, increasing your interest in gardening, home and family, and boating for the next 30 years. This year you face an important choice. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: David Attenborough, traveler/filmographer; Enrique Iglesias, singer; Don Rickles, comedian/actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be patient with coworkers today. You might be depressed about earnings or something having to do with your possessions. Don't jump to conclusions. Don't let others put you down.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Parents or authority figures might be critical of you today. Family discussions might be discouraging. Be gentle with children. (You're a Friday person in a Monday world.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Someone might say something that confirms your worst fears about yourself. This isn't really true. Negative thinking is rampant today. (Don't let it get to you.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Friends or perhaps a member of a group might criticize your ideas. (You need this like a fish needs a bicycle.) Don't take any of this personally. Ignore it.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Just be mellow today. Avoid disagreements with authority figures, parents, teachers and bosses. This is not the Monday to make a stand about anything. (Believe me.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's totally normal not to agree with other people's ideas about religion, politics or philosophy. No two people are like. This is not a big deal.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): If you feel discouraged about money and shared possessions, don't worry—this feeling will be gone by Wednesday (maybe even tomorrow). It's just a temporary dark cloud on your horizon.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with friends are intense today. This is probably because somebody is critical or judgmental. Naturally, no one wants to be criticized, right?

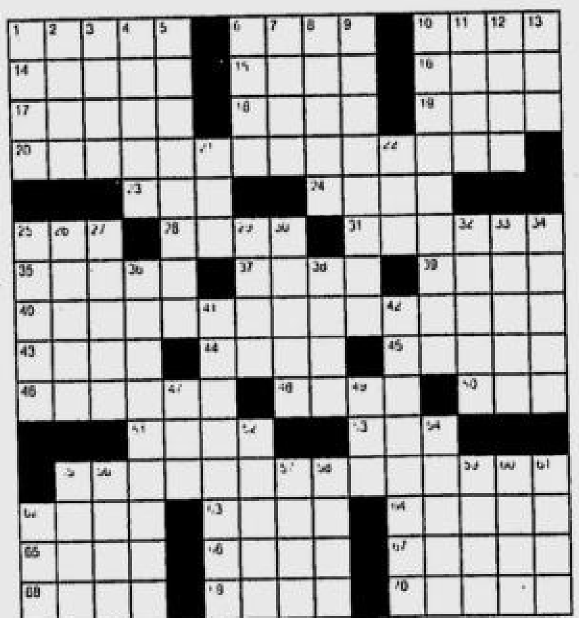
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might feel you have to defend your actions today. Don't get backed into a corner. Just play everything aboveboard. Be calm and tolerant. (He who flings dirt only loses ground.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Artists feel self-critical. Romantic partners might be critical of each other. It's easy to feel discouraged or suspicious. Oy! Fortunately, tomorrow is another day!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Be careful of your impulse to want to make somebody else over. It might be better to turn this impulse inward and address your own need to make changes.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Feelings of discouragement might lead to arguments with partners and close friends. But this doesn't have to be the case. You are responsible for your words and actions. Your response is always your own choice.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Doug Peterson
Pasadena, CA
5/8/06

ACROSS
1 Satellite circuit
6 Pond organism
10 Coin from Chiapas
14 Madcap Marx
15 Energy food, for short
16 Somewhat circular
17 Wee hr.
18 Social reformer Jacob
19 Give temporarily
20 Goes ballistic
23 Beatles hit, "__ Loves You"
24 Puny pest
25 Egg cells
28 Pitch callers
31 Swipe
35 Sinful city
37 Jumble
39 Stumblebum
40 Evidenced anxiety
43 Mary Kay competitor
44 K2's continent
45 Finest of the finest
46 More promising
48 McGregor of "Trainspotting"
50 Pitcher Maglie
51 Wholesale quantity
53 Educational org.
55 Transmission type
62 Labs and boxers
63 Unadorned
64 Under-the-bar dance
65 Bar in a car
66 At any point
67 Be of use
68 Recolors
69 Ranked player
70 Hardly verbose

DOWN
1 Anticipatory cry
2 Rajah's spouse
3 Writer Harte
4 Poker player's "check"
5 Diminutive hero of folklore
6 Plot of land
7 Not of the cloth
8 "Peer Gynt" composer
9 Anise-flavored liqueur
10 Type of party
11 All tied up
12 Caroled
13 Timeworn
21 Skirt border
22 __-di-dah
25 Grouchy Muppet
26 Swedish automaker
27 Farewell, Maria
29 Advanced degs.
30 French composer Erik
32 Perry of fashion
33 West African river
34 Ford failure
36 Literary compendiums
38 "Pygmalion" dramatist
41 Pierced places
42 Deflated
47 Belg. location
49 Simian
52 Scoundrel
54 Wanted poster option
55 Sly
56 Goggle at
57 Family diagram
58 Gnu group
59 General Bradley
60 Kimono sashes
61 Part to play
62 June celebrant

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	L	E	E	P	I	N	■	S	C	R	U	N	C	H
L	I	N	D	A	N	E	■	E	Y	E	S	O	R	E
A	B	S	O	L	V	E	■	S	M	E	A	R	E	D
L	E	N	■	S	E	D	A	T	E	D	■	M	E	G
O	R	A	L	■	R	I	M	E	S	■	G	A	P	E
M	A	R	E	S	N	E	S	T	■	R	U	L	E	R
S	L	E	E	K	E	S	T	■	M	E	S	S	R	S
■	■	■	W	I	S	T	E	R	I	A	S	■	■	■
U	N	C	A	P	S	■	R	E	L	I	E	V	E	R
N	E	A	R	S	■	A	D	V	E	R	T	I	S	E
T	O	L	D	■	B	R	A	E	S	■	S	E	C	T
A	N	I	■	F	O	R	M	A	T	S	■	W	H	O
M	A	C	H	I	N	E	■	L	O	O	P	I	E	R
E	T	O	I	L	E	S	■	E	N	T	R	E	A	T
D	E	S	S	E	R	T	■	D	E	S	E	R	T	S

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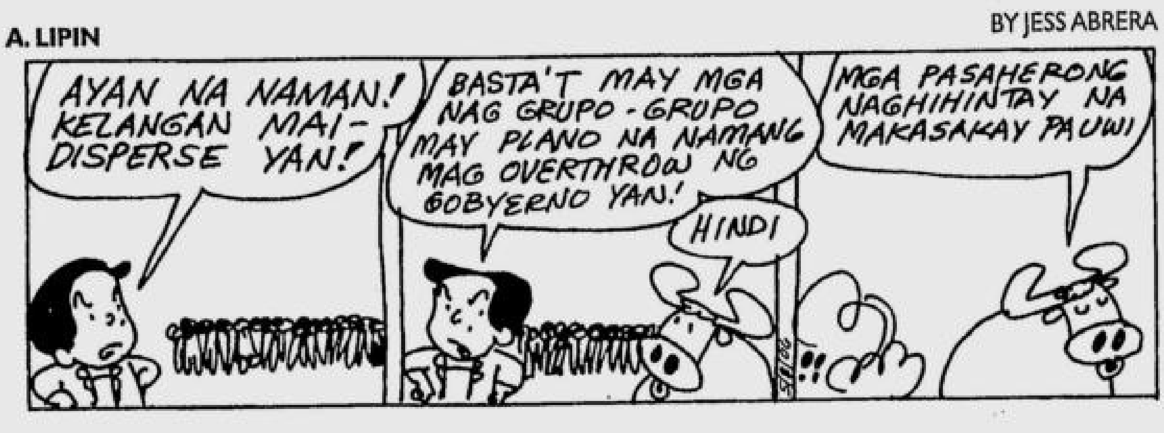
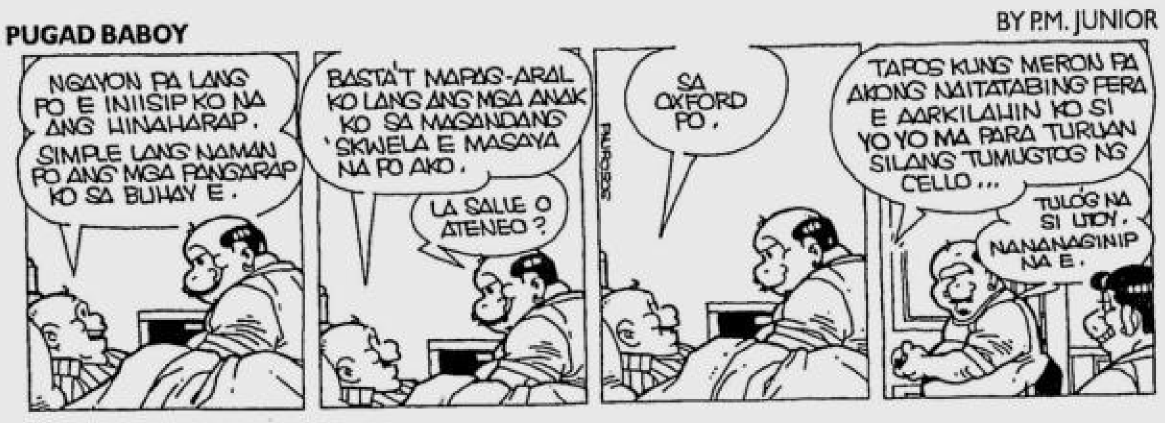
5/6/06

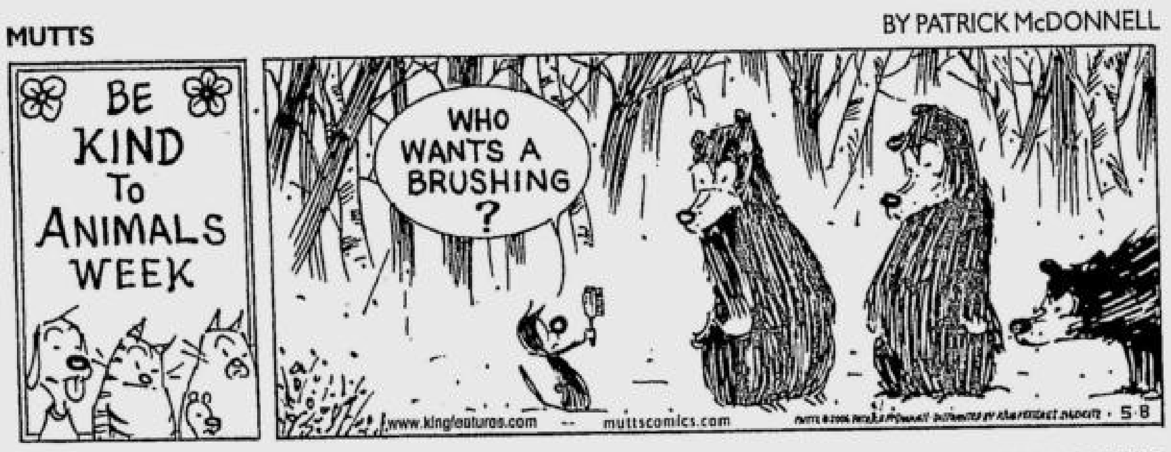
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


AYAN NA NAMAN! KELANGAN MAI-DISPERSE YAN!
BASTA'T MAY MGA NAG GRUPO-GRUPO MAY PLANO NA NAMANG MAG OVERTHROW NG GOBYERNO YAN!
HINDI
MGA PASAHERONG NAGHIHINTAY NA MAKASAKAY PAUWI

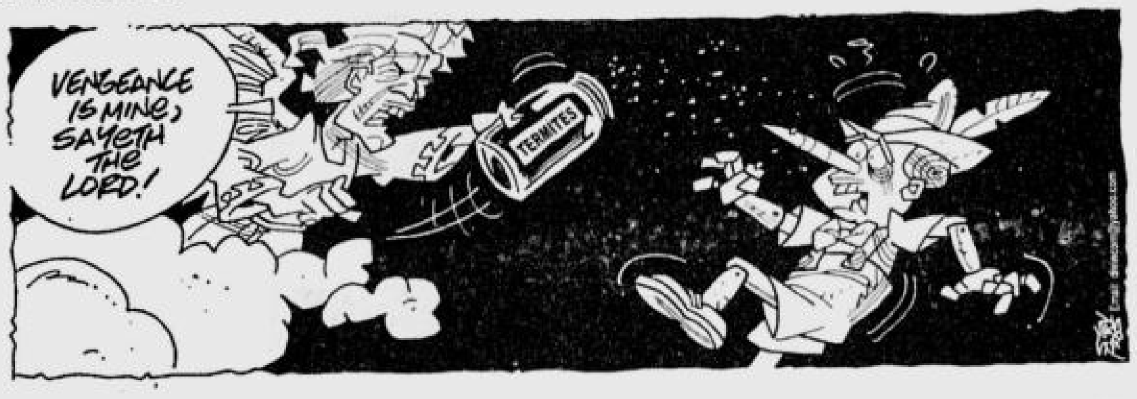
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


NGAYON PA LANG PO E INIISIP KO NA ANG HINAHARAP.
SIMPLE LANG NAMAN PO ANG MGA PANGARAP KO SA BUHAY E.
BASTA'T MAPAG-ARAL KO LANG ANG MGA ANAK KO SA MAGANDANG 'SKWELA E MASAYA NA PO AKO.
LA SALLE O ATENEO?
SA OXFORD PO.
TAPOS KUNG MERON PA AKONG NAITATABING PERA E AARKILAHIN KO SI YO YO MA PARA TURUAN SILANG TUMUGTOG NG CELLO...
TULOG NA SI UTOY. NANANAGINIP NA E.

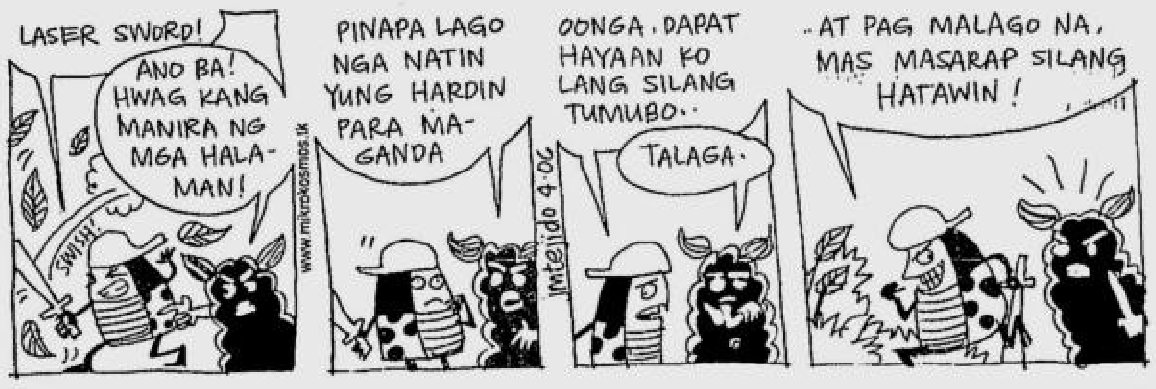
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BE KIND TO ANIMALS WEEK
WHO WANTS A BRUSHING?
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
5-8

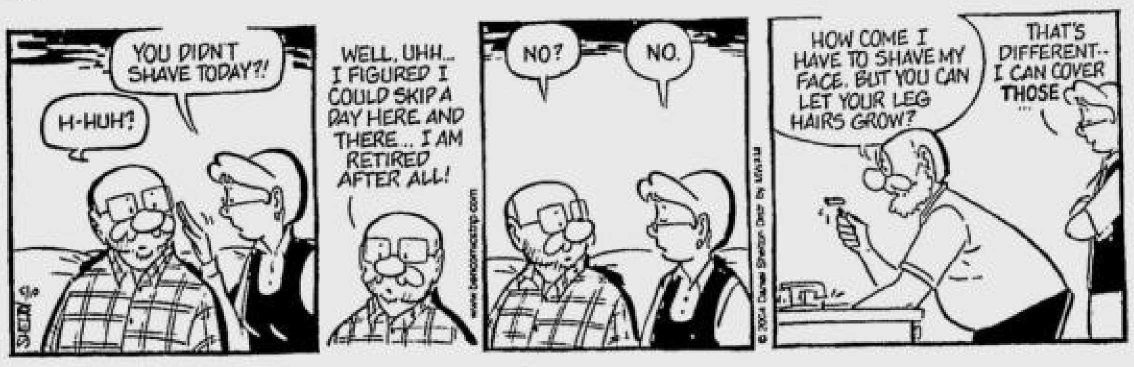
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


VENGEANCE IS MINE, SAYETH THE LORD!
TERMITES

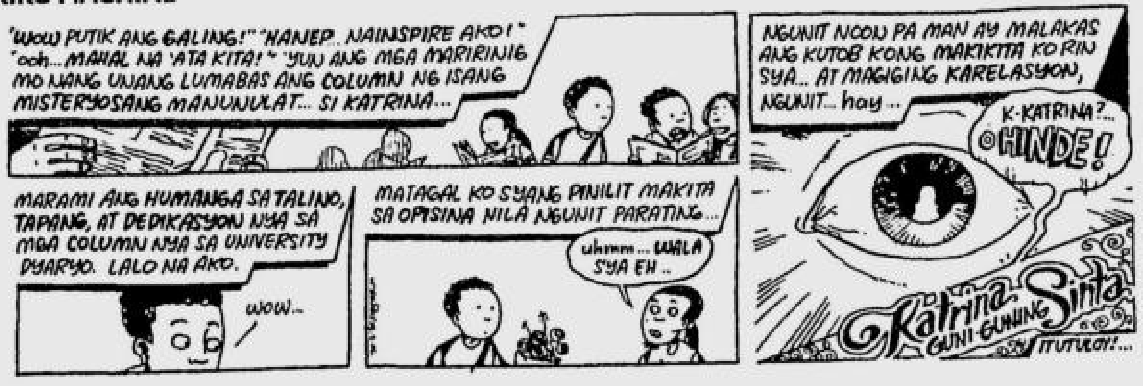
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


LASER SWORD!
ANO BA! HWAG KANG MANIRA NG MGA HALAMAN!
SWISH!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
PINAPA LAGO NGA NATIN YUNG HARDIN PARA MAGANDA
jmtejido 4.06
OONGA. DAPAT HAYAAN KO LANG SILANG TUMUBO..
TALAGA.
..AT PAG MALAGO NA, MAS MASARAP SILANG HATAWIN!

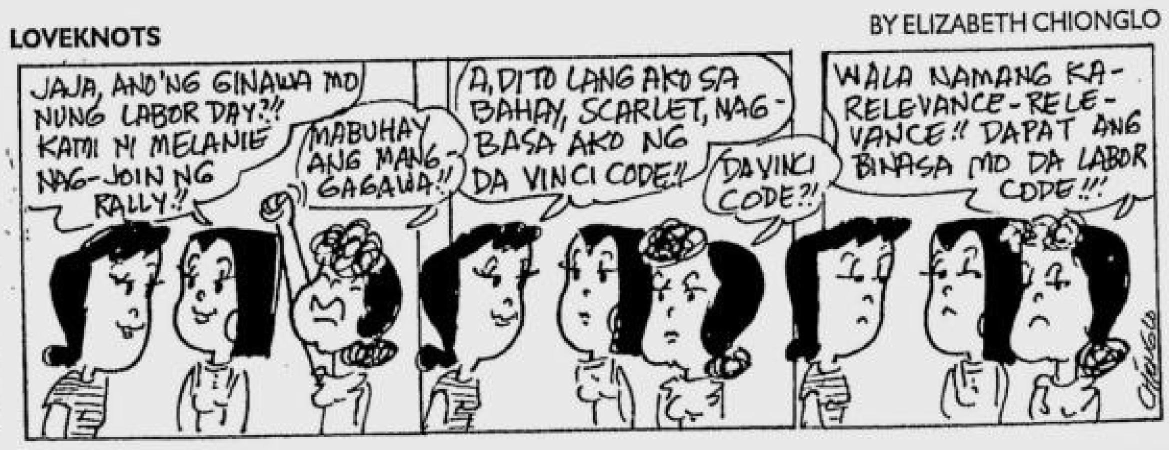
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


YOU DIDN'T SHAVE TODAY?!
H-HUH?
WELL, UHH... I FIGURED I COULD SKIP A DAY HERE AND THERE... I AM RETIRED AFTER ALL!
www.bencomicstrip.com
NO?
NO.
HOW COME I HAVE TO SHAVE MY FACE, BUT YOU CAN LET YOUR LEG HAIRS GROW?
THAT'S DIFFERENT-- I CAN COVER THOSE...

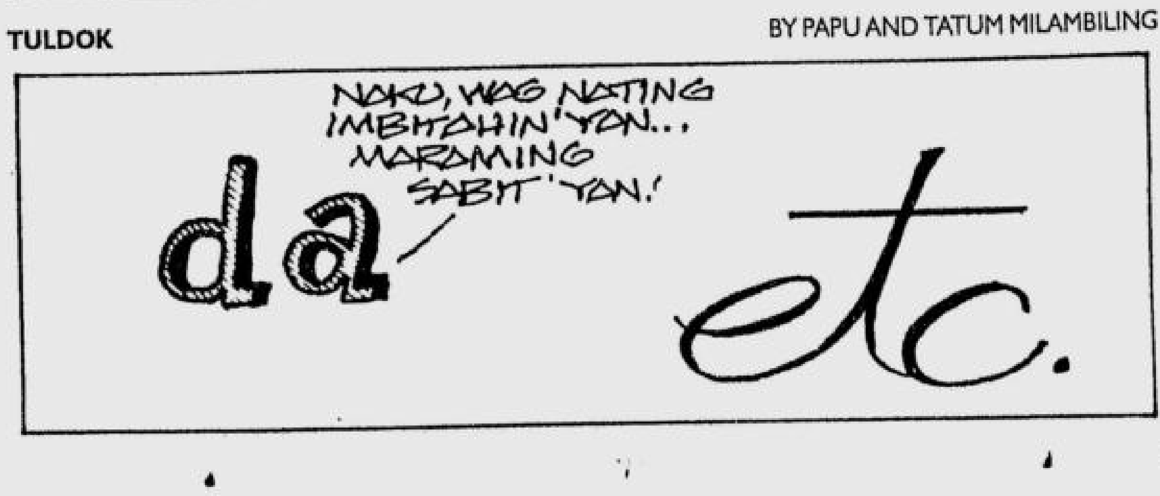
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


"WOW PUTIK ANG GALING!" "HANEP.. NAINSPIRE AKO!" "ooh... MAHAL NA 'ATA KITA!" "YUN ANG MGA MARIRINIG MO NANG UNANG LUMABAS ANG COLUMN NG ISANG MISTERYOSANG MANUNULAT... SI KATRINA...
NGUNIT NOON PA MAN AY MALAKAS ANG KUTOB KONG MAKIKITA KO RIN SYA... AT MAGIGING KARELASYON, NGUNIT... hay...
K-KATRINA?...
HINDE!
MARAMI ANG HUMANGA SA TALINO, TAPANG, AT DEDIKASYON NYA SA MGA COLUMN NYA SA UNIVERSITY DYARYO. LALO NA AKO.
wow..
MATAGAL KO SYANG PINILIT MAKITA SA OPISINA NILA NGUNIT PARATING...
uhmm... WALA SYA EH..
Katrina GUNI-GUNING Sinta
ITUTULOY!...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, ANO'NG GINAWA MO NUNG LABOR DAY?!! KAMI NI MELANIE NAG-JOIN NG RALLY?!
MABUHAY ANG MANGGAGAWA!!
A, DITO LANG AKO SA BAHAY, SCARLET, NAGBASA AKO NG DA VINCI CODE!!
DA VINCI CODE?!
WALA NAMANG KA-RELEVANCE-RELEVANCE!! DAPAT ANG BINASA MO DA LABOR CODE!!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NOKU, WAG NATING IMBITAHIN 'YAN... MARAMING SABIT 'YAN!
da
etc.

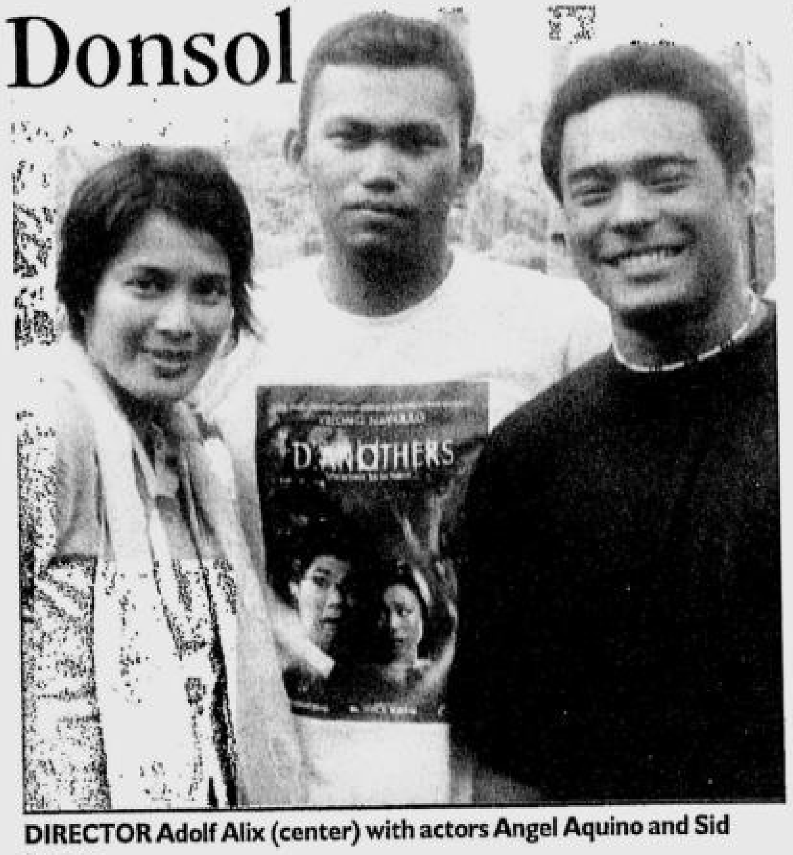
A passage to Donsol

By Valerie Cruz, *Contributor*

"WE'VE FINISHED 90 PERCENT," SAID Adolfo Alix Jr. of his digital film "Donsol," an entry to this year's Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival. "We went back to Sorsogon from April 28 to May 1 to shoot the Butanding Festival."

In the waters off Donsol, *butanding* or whale-sharks—the largest known fish in the world—are spotted from November to May.

Alix said he did extensive research on Donsol and the *butanding* in writing his screenplay. "This movie is based on real people and real stories."



DIRECTOR Adolf Alix (center) with actors Angel Aquino and Sid Lucero

Friendship

"Donsol" tells the story of friendship between a lonesome BIO (*butanding* interaction officer, played by Sid Lucero) and a widowed breast-cancer survivor (Angel Aquino).

Alix said his actors were "professional" and never complained "even when they had to shoot at 6 a.m." And Angel agreed to cut her hair for her role.

"We also hired two coaches to teach the cast Visayan Donsol and Bicolano Donsol,". Alix added.

Tongue twister

The cast was game, he said. "Jaclyn Jose couldn't pronounce *butanding*. Bembol Roco kept saying *budanding* as well."

The film also stars Lucero's aunt, Cherie Gil, famous for *kontrabida* roles. "She told me she was happy because she gets to play someone kind-hearted for a change," said the director. "Here she's Angel's best friend."

Between shoots, Alix said, Gil, Lucero and Aquino went snorkeling and whale-watching—and visited Firefly River—mangroves lit by fireflies at night.

Hard part

Now, the hard part.

"One major challenge was crowd control," said Alix. "The townspeople were starstruck, being their first time to see actors. We just asked them tokeep quiet because we were using live sound."

It's an indie production, Alix noted, and therefore low on budget. "But we didn't scrimp in terms of production values," he said, "and we made sure that everyone was paid and treated well. We had help from our sponsors, Rep. Francis Escudero, the local government of Donsol, Donsol Tourism Center and Screencraft Inc."

FEEDBACK

About ratings

From Doris Torres, Quezon City:

Thank you for continuing to write enlightening columns on the entertainment industry. Regarding your column headlined "Waiting for the other shoe to fall," please allow me to clarify "The Da Vinci Code's" PG-13 rating in the US. This simply means that parents are cautioned that some scenes may be inappropriate for audiences under 13. Still, anyone can go and see it.

An R MPAA rating means kids can see the movie only if accompanied by an adult. The MPAA also has an NC-17 rating equivalent to the MTRCB's R-18 rating. NC-17 means No one 17 and under may be admitted to see the film. Very few films in America are given an NC-17 rating. Your readers may wish to visit the website filmratings.com for more information on MPAA ratings.

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1 (DOLBY) THE WILD GP
2 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13
3 (DOLBY) AQUAMARINE PG13
4 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13

PREMIERE

(DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 (SDDS) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 (DTS) THE WILD
4 GOLD (DTS) AQUAMARINE
5 GOLD (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL
6 GOLD (SDDS) SILENT HILL
7 GOLD (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
8 (DOLBY STEREO) SLITHER
9 (DOLBY STEREO) PAMAHIIN
10 (DOLBY STEREO) D'LUCKY ONES

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1 (DOLBY) SILENT HILL
2 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 (DOLBY) AQUAMARINE

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 SILENT HILL
4 THE SENTINEL / MI-3

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY) MI-3
2 (DOLBY) THE WILD
3 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 (DOLBY) SILENT HILL

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 SLITHER
3 SILENT HIILL
4 PAMAHIIN
5 D' LUCKY ONES

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 PAMAHIIN
2 (DTS) THE SENTINEL
3 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 NANNY MC PHEE
2 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 (DTS) PAMAHIIN
4 BASIC INSTICNT 2

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 (DOLBY) EIGHT BELOW

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 SUBMERGED
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 (DOLBY) WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 (DTS) TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 (DOLBY) THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)

1 PAMAHIIN
2 NORTH COUNTRY

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) SILENT HILL
5 SLITHER

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 FINAL DESTINATION
3 SUBMERGED
4 RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 6433994

1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 SILENT HILL
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 SLITHER

Masagana CINEMA 2010
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 SLITHER
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 SILENT HILL

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 SLITHER

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) SLITHER
2 TAMPISAW
3 MASARAP HABANG MAINIT
4 (DTS) MURDER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 NANNY MCPHEE
3 (DTS) PAKAWALANG PUSO
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2
5 SLITHER

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3026

1 SUBMERGED
2 PAMAHIIN
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 (DTS EX) THE HILLS HAVE EYES
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2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 — 11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00
3 THE SENTINEL — 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
4 PAMAHIIN — 11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
5 AQUAMARINE — 12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50
6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 — 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
7 THE WILD — 1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50
8 SLITHER — 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
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7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 — 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15
8 THE SENTINEL — 12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:00

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Cruising on overdrive

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE CAUGHT "MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE III" ON ITS opening day, and found it an exciting combination of cliff-hanging events and high-tech gear.

Other elements that add to the appealing mix are the production's globetrotting bent, a strong personal motivation for protagonist Ethan Hunt, and unusual plot twists, like Hunt momentarily posing as the movie's arch villain, and the discovery of a traitor high up the IMF secret service's leadership.

This time around, Hunt (**Tom Cruise**) is sent to rescue an agent (**Keri Russell**) who's been captured by arch villain Owen Davian (**Philip Seymour Hoffman**), a top supplier of arms to terrorists.

The assignment comes at the worst possible time for Ethan, because he's engaged to a lovely nurse, Julia (**Michelle Monaghan**).

But he opts to continue his fallen comrade's mission, and his crackerjack team of operatives chalks up one "impossible" feat after another—until the traitor in their midst foils their best efforts and gives their enemy the upper hand.

The impossible nature of their feats soon strains viewers' credulity, but director JJ Abrams keeps the movie's action so eventful and even relentless that complaints momentarily become moot and academic.

Action highlights include the complex mission to kidnap the villain, the carnage that ensues during his rescue, Hunt swinging from one shanghai skyscraper to another, and his rescue of Julia as guided via satellite by a colleague in the states.

These feats are greatly aided and abetted by many high-tech "inventions" that enable our heroes to pull off the seemingly impossible, despite the enemy's deep bag of tricks—and treachery.

Offsetting these plus points is Davian's phlegmatic nature as a villain, despite the fact that he's being portrayed by the award-winning Hoffman. This robs the production of genuine fear and terror.

It's a good thing that this slack is taken up in part by the plot's hidden traitor, whose dark and devious machinations keep Hunt at risk up to the very end.

Also ending up on the debit side is the film's personal quotient, because it feels perfunctory after a while. And the lead cast's performances, while proficient, are rapidly upstaged by the production's visuals, high-tech gimmicks and action-adventure scenes.

Despite these low points, "M: I3" sustains viewers' interest. If you enjoy action-thrillers, it'll certainly perk up your viewing day.

AXN pemieres

LAST May 4, "Supernatural" premiered on the AXN channel. The series blends action, drama, mystery and science-fiction in telling its story about two brothers, Sam and Dean Winchester, who are bound by destiny and disaster to battle the evil forces of the paranormal realm. **Jared Padalecki** and **Jensen Ackles** stars. "Supernatural" airs every Thursday at 10 p.m.

It's followed at 11 p.m. by another new show, "Hex," a sinister thriller about an English girl's self-discovery and sexual awakening. "Hex" delves into the realm of unimaginable evil, but with a refreshing dash of dark humor. Christina Cole stars.

Finally, AXN's Power Pack Friday screens these films: May 12 at 9 p.m., "Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines." And May 12 at 11:30 p.m., "The Man in the Iron Mask."

Four Aces

THE FOUR Aces, the legendary quartet that gave us timeless love songs like "Love Is A Many Splendored Thing," "Stranger in Paradise" and "Three Coins in a Fountain," will perform at the Araneta Coliseum on June 3.

The quartet is now made up of tenor **Fred Diodati**, guitarist and vocalist **Joe Giglio**, bass and trumpet player **Harry Heisler**, and **Frank Sinatra** impersonator **Joe Amato**. Call 911-5555.

'Wow, Bata'

SOME 300 children from Luzon and the Visayas will participate in a three-day culture and arts festival (May 30-June 1) at Clamshell Pavilion 2, Intramuros. The "Wow Bata" festival boosts the advocacy for the welfare and protection of Filipino children. Supported by child-centered NGO Plan Philippines, the event provides an avenue for youths to showcase their talents in dance, theater, music and the visual arts. Their artworks and performances will depict important issues affecting children and their fundamental rights. Nightly presentations will showcase regional cultures while tackling problems like child labor, trafficking, prostitution and other forms of juvenile abuse. Call 892-7709.

Pupil

MTV's Rising star of the Month is Pupil. the band has a rock sound that reflects the wide range of musical tastes of its members—**Elly Buendia** on vocals and guitar, **Yan Yuzon** on guitar, **Bogs Jugo** on drums and **Dok Sergio** on bass.

Catch Pupil on "MTV Handpicked," Tuesdays at 4 p.m., and "MTV Sessions." Tuesdays at noon, with same day replays at 11 p.m. and Sundays at 11:30 a.m.

Dogs trained to sniff for bootleg DVDs

DID YOU KNOW...

LONDON—BEWARE, SMUGGLERS OF BOOTleg movies. A duo of black Labradors have been trained as the world's first DVD-sniffing dogs, a trade group has announced.

Canine sleuths Lucky and Flo got their first major live test at London's Stansted airport and immediately identified packages and parcels containing DVDs for destinations in Britain, the Federation Against Copyright Theft said.

The federation organized the dogs' training to crack down on DVD piracy. Concealed DVDs are often smuggled by criminal networks involved in large-scale piracy, the federation said.

It said the dogs had been taught to identify DVDs in boxes, envelopes and other packaging.

"This is the first time dogs have been used anywhere in the world to search for counterfeit DVDs and the results were amazing," said FACT director general Raymond Leinster. *AP*

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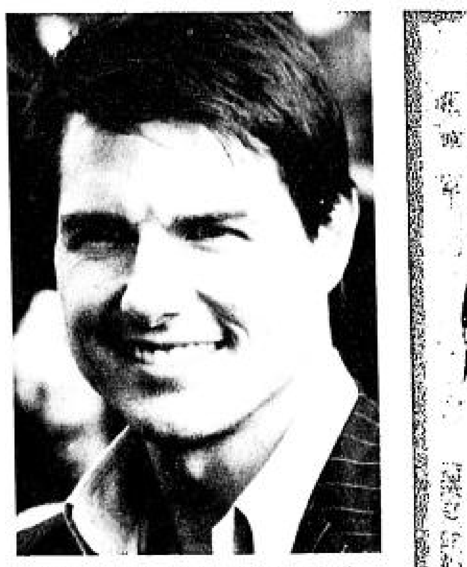
'WORTH EVERY PEN

REESE Witherspoon, $15 million



TOM Cruise, $75 M for "MI: 2"

BRAD Pitt, $20 million

WILL Smith, $25 million

TOM H

US box-office returns delivers for his $25-M

JIM Carrey, $25 million

WASHINGTON—"DA VINCI CO Tom Hanks delivers for his $2 per-movie salary, but not Jin whose films haven't done as w box office, a comparison in Ente Weekly showed Friday.

Hanks, 49 and star of th awaited film version of the best-selling religious mystery novel, "remains one of the most bankable brand names in the world, which 'Da Vinci Code' should demonstrate later this month," the Hollywood magazine reported.

Also "worth every penny" of their mega-salaries are actors Will Smith ($25 million a film), Brad Pitt ($20 million), and 2006 Academy Awards Best Actress Reese Witherspoon ($15 million).

But Canadian comedian Jin 44, who was the first actor to e the $20-million barrier for film "The Cable Guy," and w gets the same payout as Hanks bring in the bucks at the box merit that pay grade, EW said.

"He was the first to pocket a lion paycheck, but with 'Lemo et' and 'Fun with Dick and J inching past $100 million sales), studios may soon star

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UK-made 'La

NEW YORK—LASSIE HAS home again.

The collie of book, film, TV fame, returns to the silv —not to avert catastrophe wi gent barking, but to teach generation of children abou determination and love.

Light on special effects an poignant lessons of life, th made "Lassie" had its US Saturday at the Tribeca Film

Retelling

It is a retelling of "Lass Home," the 1940 children's Eric Knight which was the b the 1943 movie that launched one of the most successful franchises in sho business, including 11 featu films and a long-running T series that now graying Baby Boomers grew up on.

A poor Yorkshire family hard times sell their belov who is devoted to young wealthy Duke, who wants t animal for his granddaughter

The bond between boy a so strong that Lassie esca swims vast distances, clim tains and survives human along a 500-mile trek home f land to reunite with heartbro

Elizabeth Taylor, an 11-ye pearing in her second movi McDowell, Donald Crisp Lanchester, helped make th Lassie film resonate with the

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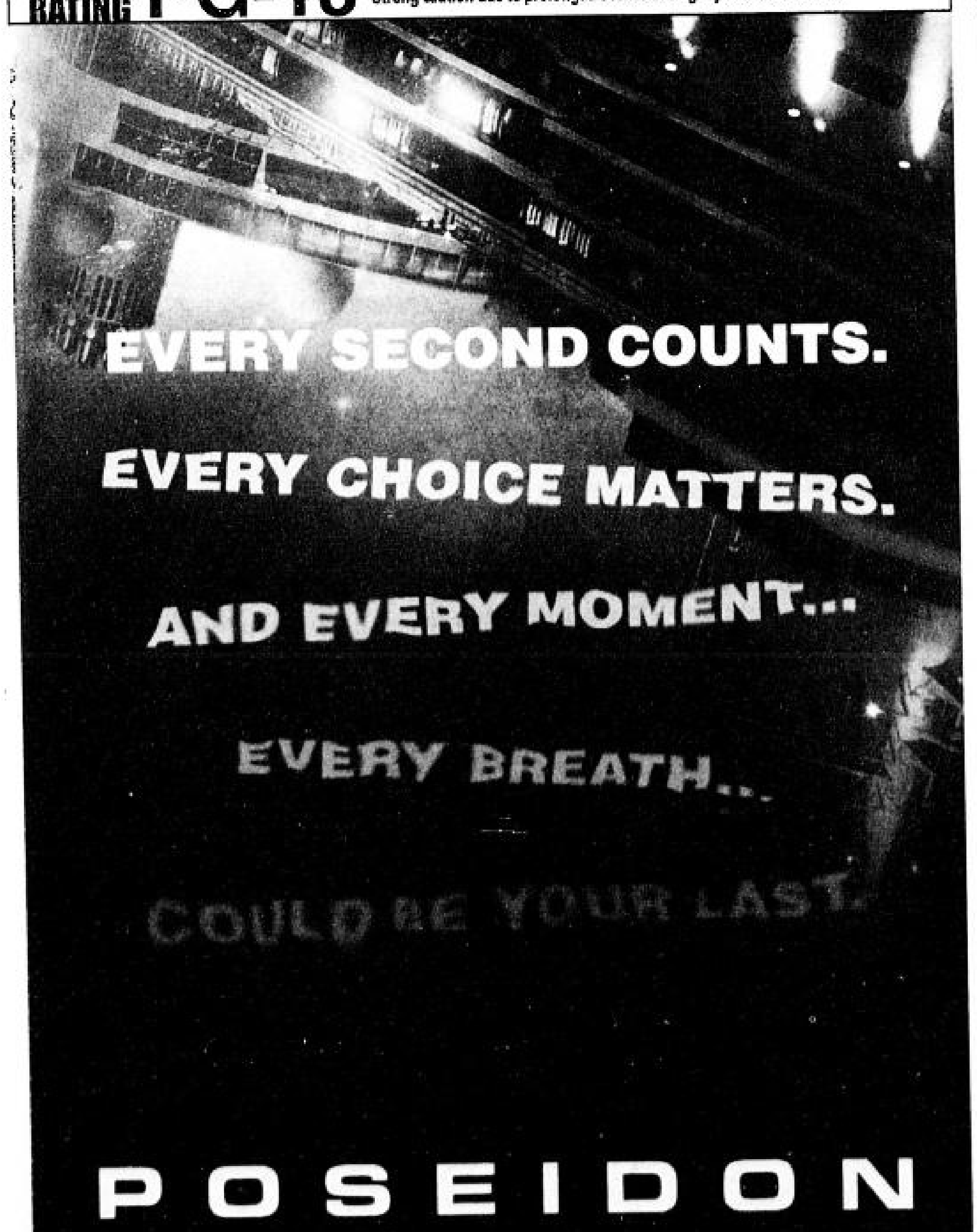

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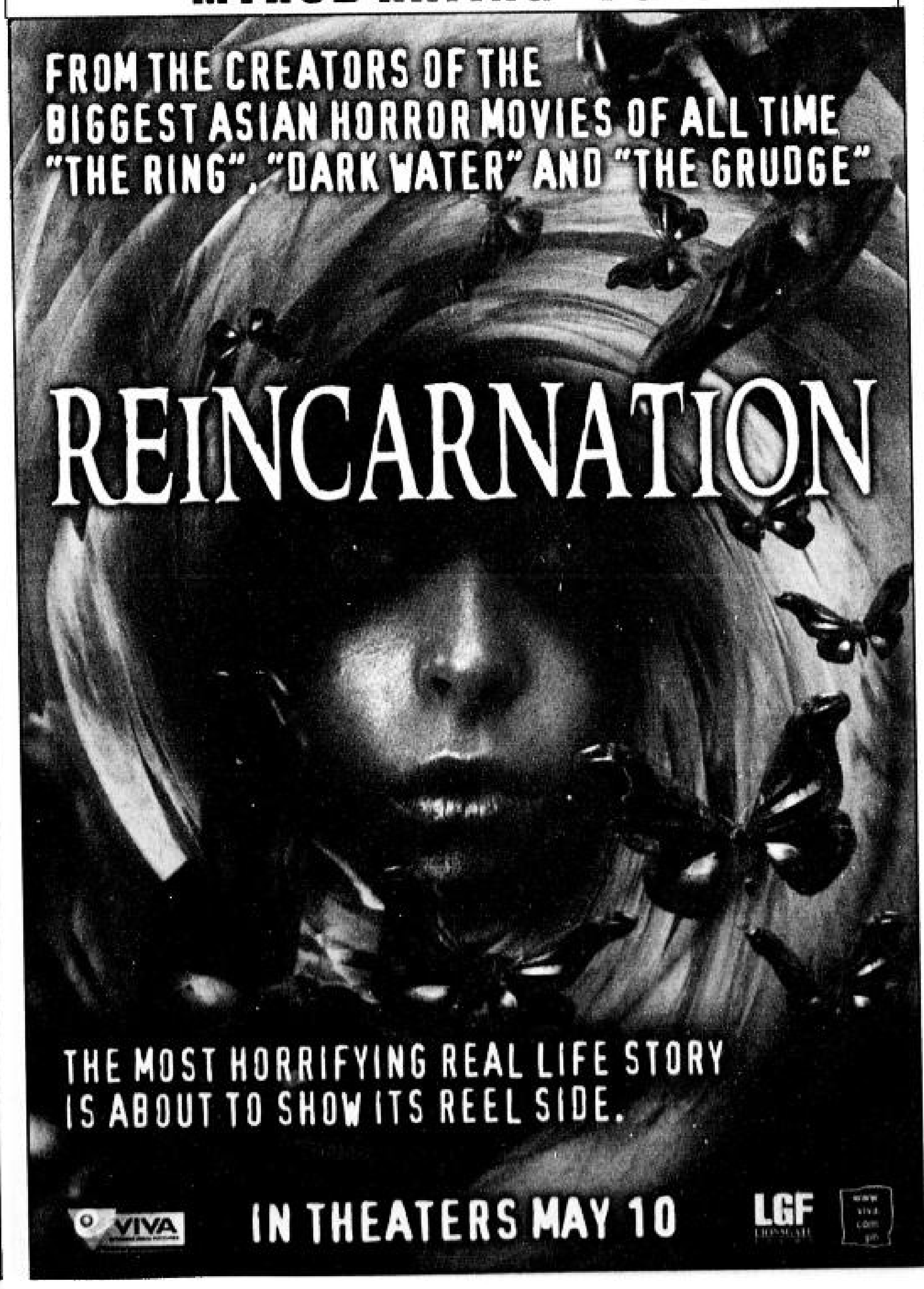

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Ianks, $25 million

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for cheaper funnymen," EW said.

EW reaches the same verdict on the $20-million paychecks of Eddie Murphy, the "Beverly Hills Cop" and "Nutty Professor" star whose most recent films have flopped.

Despite his $12-million fee, John Travolta "simply doesn't bring out fans like he used to," EW said, and neither does the former "Indiana Jones" star Harrison Ford, now 63, who commands $15 million.

> o do Will
> mith, Brad Pitt
> nd Reese
> Vitherspoon
> their own
> ılary levels...
> ıt Jim Carrey
> floundering

As regards top draw and "Top Gun" Tom Cruise, whose "Mission Impossible 3" hits the theaters in the United States Friday, he has been asking for no pay up front and risks his take on a share of the ultimate box office—up to 30 percent of the proceeds, EW says.

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With a total $2.5 billion earned by all of his films, Cruise could be worth it, EW suggested.

"It's been a reliably winning gamble for the star, who is said to have taken home $75 million for 'Mission Impossible 2' and $100 million for 'War of the Worlds.'"

But such pay-outs cut into movie studios' own incomes, EW noted, "making it an increasingly less comfortable deal for hit-starved studios." *AFP*

ıssie' premieres in US

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Peter O'Toole, 73, and Samantha Morton are featured in the new Lassie, set in Britain in the days leading up to World War II, rather than in rural American farm country where the collie's 675 half-hour TV adventures were based.

"What drew me to doing it was reading the original book," Charles Sturridge, who wrote and directed the film, said on Friday. "I was aware of Lassie vaguely as a child as a black and white flickering object in the corner of the room.

"The Lassie that I knew was an American character based on the TV series that lived on a farm and rescued people from falling down wells." The Briton, perhaps best known for directing the TV series, "Brideshead Revisited," said he was surprised by the book.

CHEER FACTOR

Unexpected

"What I found was an unexpectedly muscular story which I felt had interesting themes in it, a great sense of landscape and characters who were enjoyable."

Unlike the original, which was shot in California, the new movie is sumptuously filmed in England and Scotland.

The new film was made with 8-year-old Lassie the ninth, and three other non-related collies, whose biggest challenge were in scenes swimming across Loch Ness on her way home. *Reuters*

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3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
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4 AQUAMARINE
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④ MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
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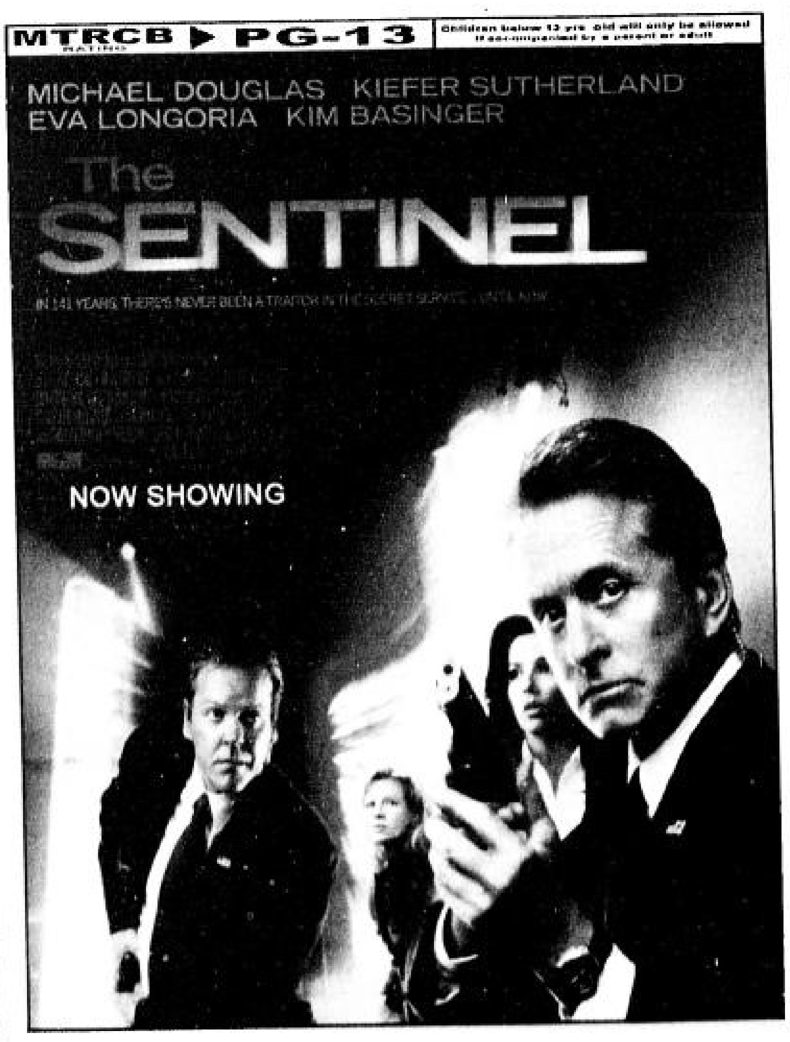

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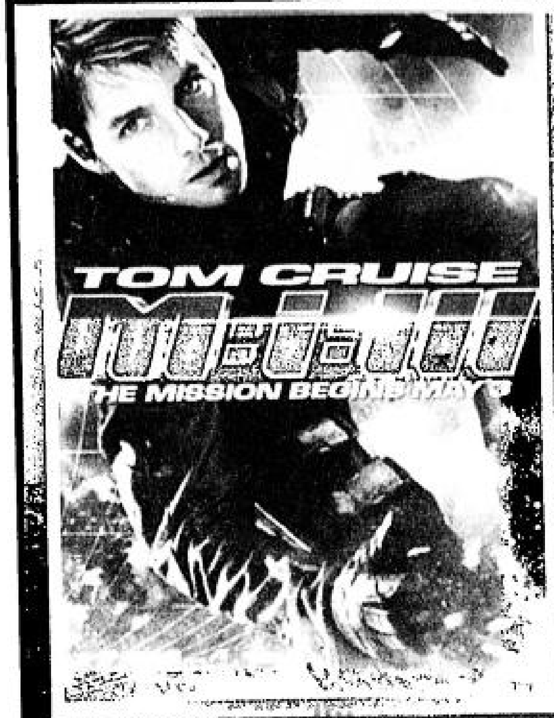

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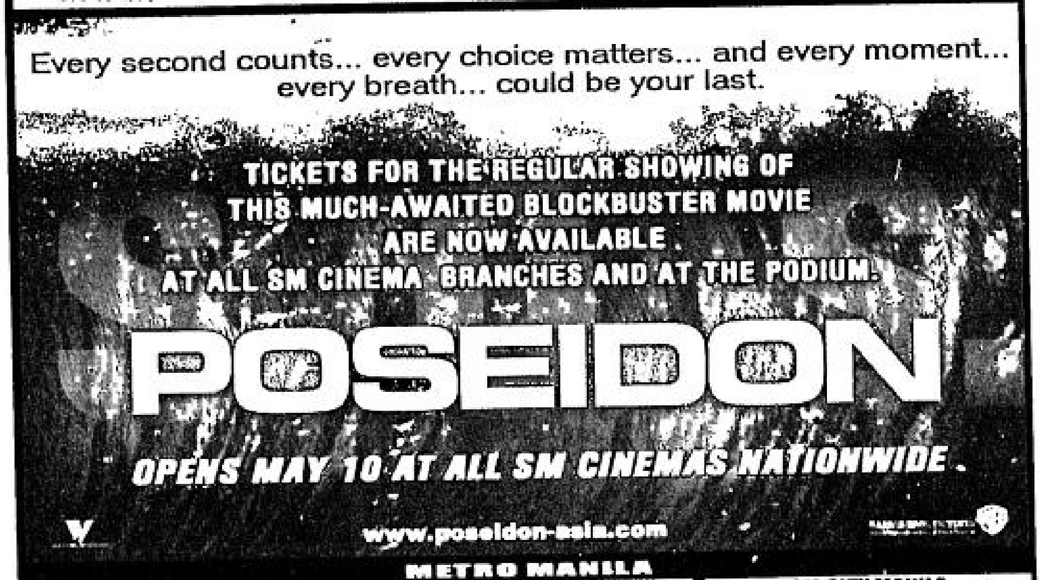

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12 D LUCKY ONES

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7 AQUAMARINE
8 SENTINEL

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2 PAMAHIIN
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 M:I:III

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
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7 M:I:III
8 THE WILD
9 D LUCKY ONES
10 EIGHT BELOW
11 SENTINEL
12 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 M:I:III
2 AQUAMARINE
3 SILENT HILL
4 D LUCKY ONES
5 M:I:III
6 SENTINEL
7 EIGHT BELOW
8 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
9 THE WILD
10 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 M:I:III
2 THE WILD
3 SENTINEL
4 M:I:III

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 SILENT HILL
5 THE WILD
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY MANILA
1 AQUAMARINE
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 SENTINEL
4 M:I:III
5 THE WILD
6 M:I:III
7 SILENT HILL
8 M:I:III
9 D LUCKY ONES
10 SUBMERGED
11 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
12 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 M:I:III
2 AQUAMARINE
3 M:I:III
4 M:I:III
5 SENTINEL
6 SILENT HILL
7 THE WILD
8 PAMAHIIN
9 D LUCKY ONES

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 SILENT HILL
4 THE WILD

SM CITY SUCAT
1 D LUCKY ONES
2 M:I:III
3 M:I:III
4 SILENT HILL

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LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 GLORY ROAD
2 THE WILD
3 M:I:III
4 M:I:III

SM CITY MARILAO
1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 PAMAHIIN
4 THE WILD

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 THE WILD
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 M:I:III
4 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY BACOOR
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 M:I:III
4 SILENT HILL
5 M:I:III
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 THE WILD
8 SUBMERGED

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 PAMAHIIN
2 NANNY McPHEE
3 M:I:III
4 SENTINEL

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 THE WILD
4 D LUCKY ONES
5 CHINESE TALL STORY
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY LUCENA
1 NANNY McPHEE
2 M:I:III
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY MOLINO
1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 THE WILD
4 SUBMERGED

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 SENTINEL
4 NORTH COUNTRY
5 THE DARK
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 M:I:III
8 CHINESE TALL STORY

SM CITY ILOILO
1 D LUCKY ONES
2 RESERVED
3 M:I:III
4 THE WILD
5 M:I:III
6 SILENT HILL
7 RESERVED
8 CHINESE TALL STORY

SM CITY DAVAO
1 M:I:III
2 GLORY ROAD
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 THE WILD
5 M:I:III
6 M:I:III

SM CITY CAGAYAN
1 M:I:III
2 PAMAHIIN
3 JUST FRIENDS
4 M:I:III

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Giuliani for president? No way, docu says

NEW YORK—WITH RUDY GIULIANI considering a run for president in 2008, a documentary aimed at tearing down his Churchillian image since Sept. 11 is about to be released.

Premiering next month, "Giuliani Time" turns a critical lens on the former mayor's controversial tenure in New York before his reassuring leadership in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks elevated his reputation.

"[This film] is a corrective to the perception of Rudy and the miracle of crime reduction in New York, Rudy and the miracle of 9/11," director Kevin Keating said in an interview.

Made for about $1.5 million, "Giuliani Time" is set to run at just one New York City theater for two weeks beginning May 12. But Keating said he hopes the reception will help it make its way onto screens around the country. A DVD version is set for release next fall.

Giuliani, who served two terms as mayor from 1994 to 2002, is depicted as a Machiavellian hothead who allowed police to trample civil liberties—particularly those of blacks, artists and welfare recipients—in the name of maintaining public order.

The film suggests Giuliani was obsessed with ridding the city of "squeegee men"—homeless people who wash windshields and demand payment—but cared little about reducing poverty or creating jobs.

He is painted as a moral hypocrite who threatened to pull public funding from a controversial art exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum but had no qualms about parading a mistress before the public.

The film gets its title from the case of Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant sodomized with a broomstick by police in 1997. A police officer was said to have uttered, "It's Giuliani time" during the attack. The claim turned out to be false, but the phrase lived on, becoming shorthand for the heavy hand of the police department during Giuliani's tenure.

Giuliani spokeswoman Sunny Mindel defended the former mayor.

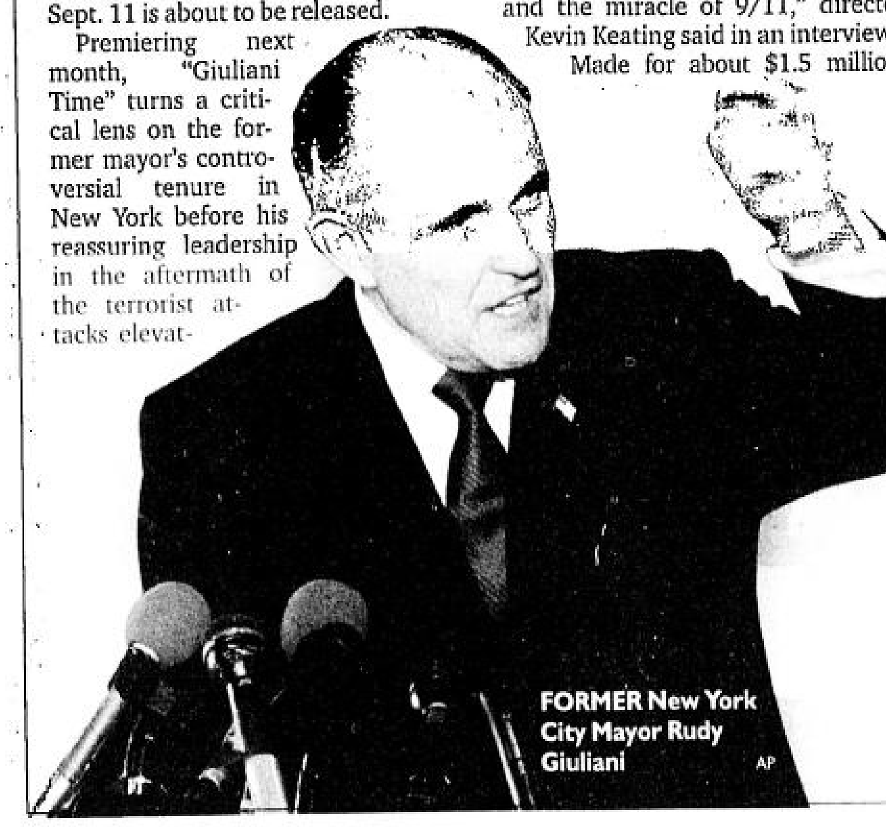
"He is recognized as the mayor who led the city from being described as ungovernable to being an international symbol of urban renaissance," Mindel pointed out.

Keating hopes his film changes the minds of voters who might be inclined to support Giuliani for president.

"Giuliani [is seen] on a white horse, the Napoleon in the corner, the hero of 9/11," Keating said. "It's the biggest delusional lie ever put forward. The guy's a demagogue."

The film renders a harsh judgment of Giuliani through video footage and numerous interviews, some with former allies of the mayor.

Among the most startling comments come from Rudy Crew, a former NYC schools chancellor. "There's something very deeply pathological about Rudy's humanity," Crew says. "He was barren, completely emotionally barren, on the issue of race." Beth Fouhy, AP



FORMER New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani AP

So what's up, John?

From page A2-1

either, so I don't know what's going on there. But I'm sure if we get the chance to talk about it, he'd be completely honest."

Nancy was referring to rumors that John is currently wooing "PBB" Batch 1 housemate Say Alonzo, whom the actor worked with as co-endorser of Doublemint Gum.

"*Nagulat ako,*" was Nancy's reaction to the John-Say rumor.

Even so, she still didn't think it was the reason that John suddenly had no time for her. "I believe coming out of the house was a big adjustment for him. Even I don't understand, but they say when you're inside the house you get used to life there. *Naninibago ka* when you come out. The good thing about John and I is that, before he went in, we had established a really good friendship. There was chemistry; there was a lot of *kilig.*"

She said she first met John at the office of their

SO WHAT'S/ A2-7

Ethel Booba: That's unfair

From page A2-1

opening number or funny spiels." When a new PM took over, the show became "serious," Ethel claimed. "The new PM did not want me to do my usual spiels."

Ethel renewed her contract with "EC" last October. But she started to miss shooting days, and deductions were made from her talent fees. That was okay, she said. What made her feel uncomfortable was the "serious" format. "That's the reason it did not click anymore."

Ethel and boyfriend Alex Crisano recently figured in a very public squabble in Boracay. The incident was touted as one of the reasons that Ethel was no longer fit to host a show.

The two reconciled shortly after—only to break up again last week after another fight.

"I was in my dressing room in Punchline, after a performance," Ethel recalled. "He dragged me out to the street. I was very embarrassed. I'll never take him back."

Gossip columns attributed the couple's behavior and Ethel's sudden weight loss to drug abuse.

"I'll take a drug test anytime," Ethel said. "I've been losing weight because I'm sick." Without disclosing details, she said she was to undergo an operation on her cervix for an ailment diagnosed a year ago.

Still, project proposals continue to come Ethel's way. Ethel is hosting a new noontime show on QTV, "Pasiklaban ng Bayan." She also has a movie with Viva Films, "Reyna," to be directed by Wenn Deramas.

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 AQUAMARINE	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	3 SILENT HILL	4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	3 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 12:40, 3:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 AQUAMARINE	5 THE WILD	6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	7 SILENT HILL
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SENTINEL	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 1:15, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 2:35, 5:20, 8:05, 10:50 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 AQUAMARINE 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 1:55, 4:40, 10:10 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:45, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
	3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	4 SILENT HILL	5 AQUAMARINE	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	3 NORTH COUNTRY	4 THE DARK
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 AQUAMARINE		
	3 SILENT HILL	4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	

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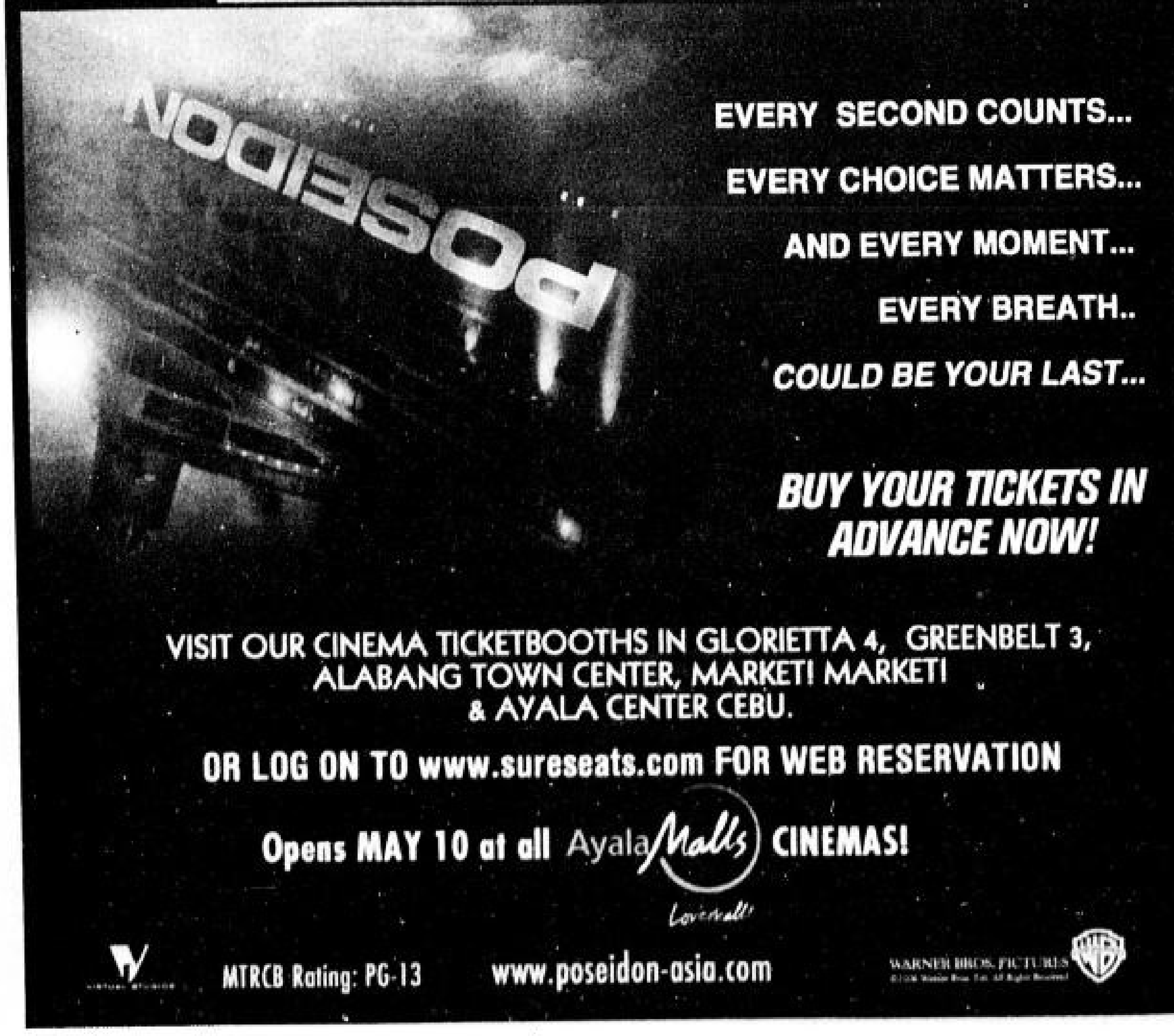
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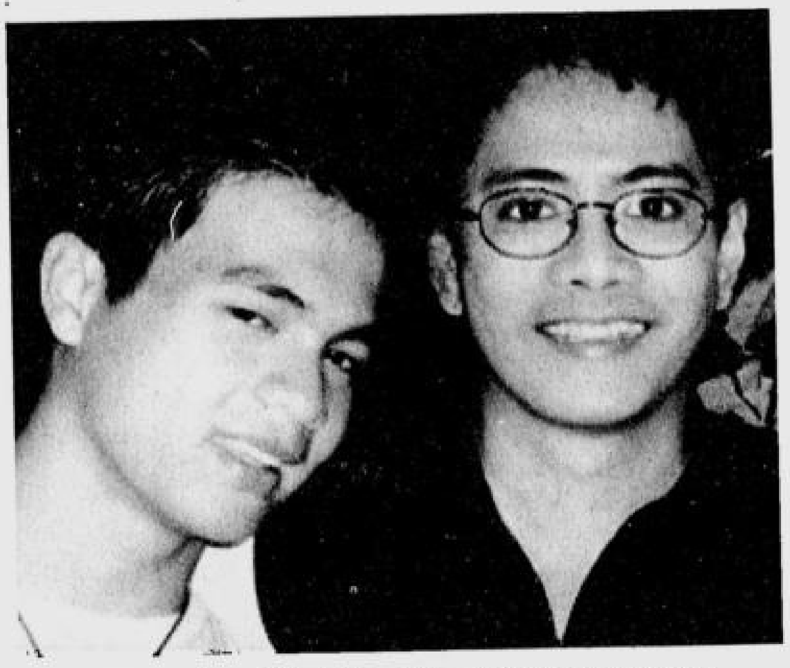
Life outside the house

'PBB' director and counselor say the teen housemates need longer debriefing

By Bayani San Diego Jr.


VOLUNTEER evictee Aldred Gatchalian with Dr. Randy Dellosa

LONGER DEBRIEFING. This is what teen housemates of the ABS-CBN reality show "Pinoy Big Brother" apparently need when they leave the now-famous house on Mother Ignacia Avenue.

"[It turns out] the experience is too much for a kid to handle," PBB director Lauren Dyogi told INQUIRER Entertainment.

(The early evictees' first press conference today has been postponed, in fact, to allow more intensive counseling sessions.)

Dyogi admitted that "PBB" is taking extra care with the teen participants.

Four have been evicted so far—Aldred Gatchalian who chose voluntary eviction; Mikki Arceo and Niña Jose, the first two to be voted off by viewers; and Bam Romana, who was evicted forcibly.

Aldred and Mikki, already out of the house at the time of INQUIRER Entertainment's interview with Dyogi, were both coping well, according to Dyogi and Dr. Randy Dellosa, resident psychologist.

"Aldred is excited to meet the public," said Dellosa. "He's eager to show off his other talents, like singing."

"Mikki is bored at the hotel [where she is staying for counseling], waiting for her media interviews and guestings on 'ASAP' and 'The Buzz'" Dyogi said.

Last Saturday, Aldred and Mikki were allowed to go malling. "Fans approached them for snapshots," Dellosa reported. "They enjoyed feeling like stars. Of course, Aldred had more fans because, on the show, Mikki had looked aloof."

The director agreed that the kids would need more than one session with Dellosa. "We will provide them with as many sessions as they need."

Instead of sending him home to Pasay City upon exit, Aldred was booked in a Quezon City hotel. Dyogi explained it was "to shield the boy from too much attention from relatives, neighbors and the media."

Mikki and Aldred have been billeted in different hotels and are being given separate counseling sessions. "We felt it was better for them," Dyogi said. "We're not used to this; it's our first time to deal with teenagers."

Dellosa asserted that the counseling sessions were opportunities to deal with all sorts of issues. "First, they need to resolve any unfinished business. Second, they need to be taught how to explain themselves in public, in press conferences for example. We want to make sure they won't be misinterpreted. Also, they have to realize that they may not last in show biz, so they have to maximize [current] opportunities."

Unfortunately, "striking while the iron is hot" had prevented some evictees from the previous "PBB" editions to seek his help, Dellosa recounted. "All of them are required, according to the rules, to undergo at least one debriefing session. I personally feel they need at least four, but some of them became too busy. They got overwhelmed by show biz projects and assignments. There's the danger of frustration when the excitement over them dies down."

So is there life after eviction for the teen housemates?

"They are considered flashes in the pan until they prove themselves," Dellosa said. "Some stars already have looks and talent, and still they don't last. The teen housemates should be prepared for that."

He said the "PBB" teens seem determined to make a name for themselves in the biz for financial reasons. "For them, it's the easiest way to earn big bucks. It's a reflection of the values and difficulties of our times."

MICKEY Mouse

Preschoolers, meet Mickey & the gang

KID FIT

MICKEY MOUSE AND HIS GANG RETURNED to TV screens everywhere last Saturday on the new pre-school series, "Mickey Mouse Clubhouse" on Playhouse Disney Channel!

"Mickey Mouse Clubhouse" is the first television series starring Mickey in computer generated animation. And since it's on Playhouse Disney Channel, "Clubhouse" introduces Mickey to a whole new generation of preschoolers!

"Clubhouse" is a learning-focused, song- and fun-filled series produced by Walt Disney Television Animation especially for Playhouse Disney Channel. It is designed to introduce, in a fun and interactive manner, problem solving and early mathematics skills—sequencing, counting, classifying, sorting, complex patterns, spatial relations, size and distance comparisons, addition, subtraction, weights and balances, etc.

All present

Minnie, Goofy, Donald, Pluto and Daisy join Mickey in this vibrant new interactive series that invites young viewers to help solve challenges and overcome obstacles.

Each engaging story features a different theme and offers cognitive, social and creative-learning opportunities through a dynamic, play-along experience. Interactivity is key from start to finish.

Mickey speaks directly to preschoolers, asking questions and encouraging them to play games, participate in special phrases or cheers, and solve puzzles to reach a goal.

Each episode kicks off with Mickey inviting viewers to join him in calling out the "magic" phrase, "Meeska, Mooska, Mickey Mouse!" With that, the fantastic, mouse-shaped structure that serves as the series' shape-shifting home base appears.

Then Mickey introduces the theme of the day by leading the audience to the Picture Puzzle or the Silly Switch. It's at this point in the show that something unexpected happens, which serves as the catalyst for the day's journey.

Fun recap

After successfully completing the day's adventure, Mickey and friends return to the Clubhouse where Mickey recaps the day's fun activities and lessons learned through the celebratory "Hot Dog!" song.

Mickey turns to the audience and, with a wave and a wink, he promises, "Se ya real soon!"

The theme song and the "Hot Dog!" song are written and performed by Grammy Award-winning alternative rock band. They Might Be Giants.

Faust reunites for 'Homecoming'

SHOW TIME

TOYM AWARDEE CESARE A.X. SYJUCO—ON the second leg of a promotional tour for his 15-track poetry album to be released later this month—returns to Penguin Cafe Gallery in Malate for a multimedia event, "Home Is The Underground."

It will be a sentimental reunion for the artist's past collaborators, supporters and friends, who will join him in an evening of music, poetry, and other live performances for the first time in over a decade.

Among Cesare's guests on Tuesday, May 9 at 8 p.m., will be his five children, who once comprised the rock band Faust.

Cesare will perform three poems from his forthcoming CD, "A Sudden Rush of Genius."

"We've always wanted to perform with our Dad, but he's always preferred to work alone," says 20-year-old poet Maxine Syjuco, Cesare's youngest daughter who was Faust's prodigious drummer at age 11. "This is going to be a precious moment for us al l… something that will probably never happen again."

CESARE Syjuco (inset) and the Faust band

Dave at Suburbia

Dave performs on May 12 and 19, 8 p.m., at Suburbia bar and restaurant, on Adriatico St., Malate, Manila.

He recently released a remake of "What Makes You Stay," from the '90s breakthrough singer Deana Carter. Dave's CD-Lite album of the same title is now available in record bars. Call 0915-9079998.

DAVE

Today

Blue Jean Junkie at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

May 10

"Tipa… Masters of Guitars: Nyoy Volante" at Teatrino Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan

K and The Boxers at Klownz Araneta

Sitti at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

May 11

The CompanY at Hard Rock Café

"Tipa… Masters of Guitars: Nyoy Volante" at Teatrino Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan

May 12

Bituin Escalante in her first major concert at Onstage, Greenbelt 1

Hotdog with Members and Butterflies at Suburbia Malate

"Tipa… Masters of Guitars: Nyoy Volante" at Teatrino Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan

Hale at Ratsky Malate

True Faith at Ratsky Morato

Kim Flores at Del Rio Resort in Marbel City

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Tomas Morato

Dave at Suburbia

May 13

Bituin Escalante in her first major concert at Onstage, Greenbelt 1

The CompanY at Hyatt Regency Manila's Calesa Bar

Side A at Starmall La Piñas

"Tipa… Masters of Guitars: Nyoy Volante" at Teatrino Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan

Winston In Concert featuring Bamboo and Sugarfree at Cocomangas Oyster Bar in Boracay

True Faith at Ratsky Malate

Kim Flores at South Koronadal Gym in Marbel City

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Malate

May 16

K and The Boxers at Zirkoh Greenhills

May 17

K and The Boxers at Klownz Araneta

Sitti at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

May 18

The CompanY at Hard Rock Café

May 19

Troy Montero at Ratsky Malate

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Tomas Morato

Dave at Suburbia

May 20

Winston In Concert featuring Parokya ni Edgar and Tarcisius at Cocomangas Oyster Bar in Boracay

Kim Flores at the La Salle Gym in Bacolod

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Malate

May 21

Ara Mina at Ratsky Morato

Join the Club at Robinson's Place Dasmariñas

May 24

Sitti at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

May 26

Silver: The Songs of Vehnee Saturno at the Araneta Coliseum with Jay-R, Rachelle Ann Go, Mark Bautista, Juris Fernandez and guests Ella Mae Saison, The CompanY and Martin Nievera

K and The Boxers at Ratsky Tomas Morato

Hotdog at Suburbia Malate

SHARON Cuneta (inset) with husband Sen. Kiko Pangilinan in Dubai

Joyce Jimenez, graduate

RUSHES

JOYCE Jimenez

JOYCE JIMENEZ IS GRADUATING from her business course in Australia this year.

She worked double time, "overloading units," to finish earlier than her peers.

Upon graduation, she plans go full-time in her business venture, Private Joyce lingerie and skincare.

Not so happy

"I'm so busy with work that I don't even think about it," was all businesswoman Happy Ongpaoco could say when asked about the dismissal of the cases she filed against Quezon City councilor Aiko Melendez.

The two women had an altercation in a Makati restaurant last year.

Nth honeymoon

Megastar Sharon Cuneta and husband Sen. Francis Pangilinan celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary last month with a trip to Hanoi, Vietnam and Bangkok, Thailand. Little daughters Frankie and Miel were with them. So was that a honeymoon?

AMALIA Fuentes

How it happened

Remember this? "Star Talk" staffers had been trying to contact Amalia Fuentes—who was in the middle of a word war with daughter Liezl Sumilang—for the longest time.

Suddenly, she turned up at the studio, brandishing her own questionnaire. She wasn't in the lineup; that's why she was cut off.

Contender

Give her a year. Annabelle Rama just might give top endorsers Sharon Cuneta and Kris Aquino some very stiff competition.

Annabelle, again featured with her twins Richard and Raymond in the latest Advil ad, is wickedly wacky.

ANNABELLE Rama

Costly package

The boat carrying Viva Hot Babe Jaycee Parker and her boyfriend actor Danilo Barrios capsized on the way to the Floating Bar on Boracay island last week.

Parker threatened to file charges against the resto owner (the boat ride was part of the treat). "See you in court," she said.

We wonder how much she paid for the package?

So what's up, John?

From page A2-6

talent manager, Arnold Vegafria, in January— "right after I broke up with Bullet (son of former congressman Romeo Jalosjos)."

Nancy recalled: "I guess John saw how upset I was. He started calling and sending me text messages. Actually, all of Arnold's talents—who are like my brothers and sisters—did the same. There was just a special spark between John and me."

How are you and Bullet now?

I don't know how he is. Basically, we broke up because he had a hard time understanding my work. It's ironic that he's now with Katrina Halili, who's also in show business. But I want him to be happy.

Could you be friends with him again?

I'm totally at peace about our breakup, though we're not speaking right now. If I were to see him or bump into him, I'm completely prepared to say hello.

Do you feel bad that John seems to have turned around?

Not really. I had just gotten out of a bad breakup when John started courting me. I still need time to heal and learn to love myself again. I think this is just the perfect time.

Your critics say you change boyfriends way too often.

Mabilis ba? I guess I'm just lucky. I break up with a boyfriend, and someone's there. This happened for three years straight, so after this latest one, I need time for myself.

What do you look for in a guy?

Humor and sensitivity [but] he still has to be a man's man. I also want someone who is respectful and trustworthy.

Would you now prefer a boyfriend from show biz, someone who understands your work?

Maybe. I don't want to be particular about who I'd go out with the next. I'll just love whoever God sends to me.

Speaking of work, how's your career going?

Everything is going perfectly in terms of pacing. I just signed for two new endorsements and I've been doing a lot of magazine work. I hope to do more. I also miss regular TV work.

WITH Basil Valdez, Freestyle and Side A bands in Tavern on the Square

ROMY HOMILLADA

HE'S MY archangel," says Maricel Soriano.

The Godfather

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

Show biz bigwig Wyngard Tracy used to be a workhorse called 'production assistant'—just like Noli de Castro, Charo Santos and Wilma Galvante ...

FROM the ex-workhorse's mouth: "They say I'm a tyrant."

PARTY boy, with Luis Potenciano, husband of beauty queen Lampel Luis.

URBAN LEGEND NO. 1: A TALENT manager scares her wards by recounting how her mentor/tormentor Wyngard Tracy once tore a singer's gown to shreds—while she was wearing it!

Urban legend No. 2: Side A, then a neophyte band, was five minutes late for a 3 o'clock meeting with Tracy. He asked them to come back at 3 o'clock the next day.

Holy terror is the image formed here, but a different portrait of Tracy is painted by other colleagues.

Urban legend No. 3: Arnell Ignacio was panicking because the plane was delayed and he would be late for a show in Taiwan. Throughout the ordeal, Tracy, Ignacio's manager at the time, never let on that he himself had lost his passport at the airport (it was found the next day).

YESTERDAY

Urban legend No. 4: Vilma Santos wanted to give an honorarium to one of Tracy's talents after a show. With dispatch, Tracy phoned up the Star for All Seasons and warned her that their friendship would end if she insisted.

Take it from Tracy

Friends are currently waxing nostalgic because Tracy officially retired last November after three decades in the biz.

To separate fact from fiction, it's best to take it from him.

He isn't inclined to romanticize or sanitize his story. "Some say I'm a tyrant; others say I'm generous. I just do what I have to do. I've helped people because a lot of people helped me in the past."

Paying it forward, is how he explains it. "It's not a conscious effort. If I could, I'd help even a total stranger."

Two beneficiaries of Tracy's tutelage are managers Shirley Kuan and Veana Fores.

"He taught me the ropes of talent managing," Fores remembers.

"I had just arrived from Los Angeles and didn't know anybody in Manila. Wyngard shared with me everything he knew about local show business," Kuan recalled. "He's The Godfather of talent managers."

The Godfather points to his own mentors, a veritable Who's Who in local entertainment—RPN 9's Kitchie Benedicto and family, Viva's Vic del Rosario, TV director Bert de Leon and radio executive Dennis Cabalfin. "I will be forever grateful to them," he says.

Cabalfin signed 17-year-old Tracy, who was also a ramp model, as deejay for dwKW in 1974. Deejaying led to radio and TV production.

TAKING Aiko Melendez to meet her groom, Martin Jickain, in February.

"I started as a PA (production assistant)," Tracy recalls. "I made coffee, spliced tapes and mimeographed scripts. Among my contemporaries was Noli de Castro."

De Castro, who later became a news anchor, is now vice president of the Philippines, of course.

"My fellow PAs have become industry movers and shakers—Charo Santos-Concio, Cory Vidanes and Chit Guerrero of ABS-CBN, for example, and Wilma Galvante of GMA 7," Tracy says.

He trained under the "most demanding directors in town"—Kitchie, Mitos Villareal, Fritz Ynfante, Freddie Cochran and Johnny Manahan.

Production work prepared him well for his later incarnation as talent manager, Tracy notes.

In 1977, Del Rosario hired him at Vicor, where he worked as road manager for balladeer Basil Valdez.

To this day Tracy counts Valdez as his most loyal talent—and friend.

Valdez himself says, "Wyngard never walked in front or behind me, we always walked side by side."

IN the early '80s, with Pabs Dadivas, Johnny Manahan, Basil and George Dadivas

The foremost singer's most outstanding memory is of Tracy waiting in the wings at the Carnegie Hall. "He looked intimidating. Tall, long hair in a ponytail—and he was wearing shorts though it was winter in New York!"

Another former talent, Jaya, recounts how Tracy would sing all the songs of Valdez and the Side A band backstage. "He has memorized all the lyrics! Even the parts of the backup vocalists!"

More tales

In Beverly Hills, he treated the Freestyle band to a shopping spree. In New York, during Side A's first tour, he took the boys to a restaurant called Metro Manila.

"It was like Bulacan in the middle of Manhattan," remembered Bernie Severino, Side A drummer.

Tracy is the first to admit that his "management style" is "dictatorial."

"If you decide to be my talent," he says, "you should surrender all decision-making to me. If you insist on deciding for yourself, then you should manage yourself."

That was precisely the question posed to Diamond Star Maricel Soriano by friends when the idea of being managed by Tracy was hatched in 2002.

"We discuss, but most of the time his decision prevails," Soriano admits. "That's the way it works. It's very clear between us. In the end, it's his decision, not mine."

Soriano and Tracy go a long way back. They first met in the mid-1970s, on the set of "Kaluskos Musmos," where Soriano was one of the child stars.

"She was still in pigtails and her constant companion was her grandmother," Tracy reminisces.

"Wyngard was good friends with *Tita* Kitchie and Mr. M (Manahan)," Soriano also looks back. "They were all tall, like giants. Beside them I looked like a *surot* (bed bug)."

Theirs is a relationship tested by time, says Soriano, one that will remain strong even if Tracy follows through on a plan to relocate to faraway Soto Grande, Spain.

"WE WALK side by side," says Basil.

"He's my archangel, my gladiator," Soriano enthuses. "It's like a father-daughter relationship. So even if he's abroad, I know I can always call him if I need to consult anything."

Secret language

With his closest friends and talents, neither time nor distance is a barrier.

Quips Pilita Corrales, Asia's Queen of Song and one of the Vicor stars Tracy handled in the 1970s: "Even if we don't see each for a long time, we can always pick up the *kuwentuhan* (conversation) where we left off."

Tracy relates that he has developed a special secret language with Valdez, Corrales and his other talents.

"All I need to do is put my hand on my mouth to tell Basil to smile if he's being too reticent and shy," he explains. "Or I would pat a chair beside me, to tell Pilita to sit down if she's being too hyper at a party. I don't care if you're the Diamond Star or Asia's Queen of Song; I will tell you what I think."

That's trademark Tracy.

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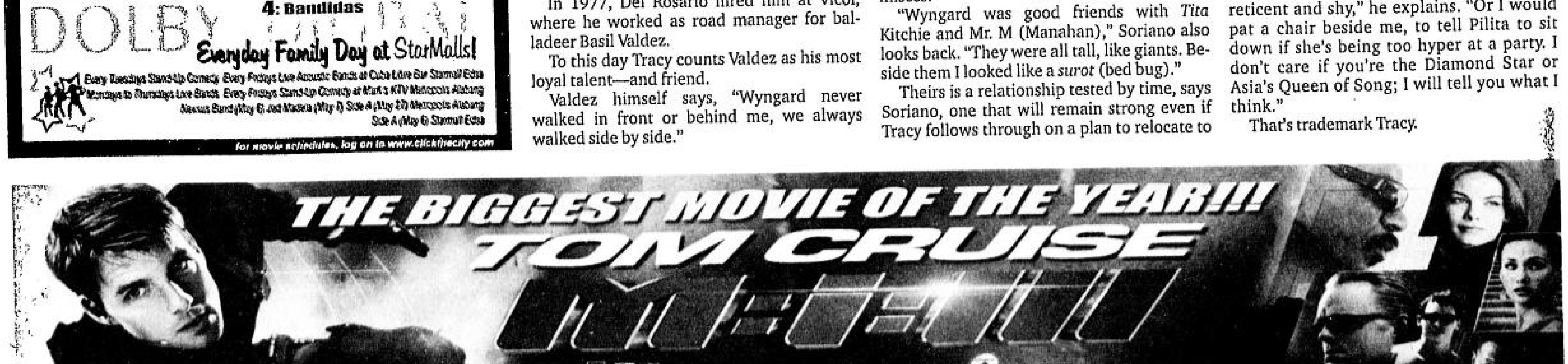

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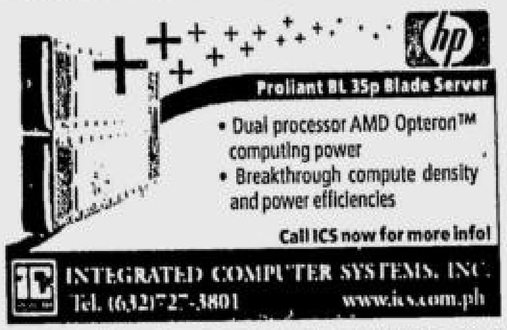

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Q1 debt service bill runs up to ₱279B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT spent P279.364 billion in the first quarter of the year to service its debts—64 percent higher than what it originally planned under the 2006 fiscal program.

The government was supposed to allocate only P170.218 billion for debt servicing during the three-month period. This included payment of principal obligations, as well as loan interest.

But according to the Bureau of the Treasury, the government's healthy cash position has allowed it to pay some more of its debts, including those that are still set to mature.

Data from the BTr and the Department of Finance showed that for interest payments alone, the government spent P103.822 billion in the first quarter, which was 8 percent over the programmed P96.017 billion.

Of the amount spent for interest payments, P59.680 billion was used to service domestic obligations, while the remaining P44.142 bil-

QI DEBT/ B2

BSP receives fair mark in JP Morgan report

By Doris C. Dumlao

US INVESTMENT BANK JP MORGAN HAS given the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas a positive mark in its management of strong foreign inflows, which otherwise could result in excess domestic liquidity and aggravate inflationary pressures.

In a commentary dated April 25, JP Morgan economist Yen Ping Ho said the Philippines—along with India and Thailand—were "sterilizing effectively amid persistent foreign asset growth."

Sterilization is measured as the change in foreign reserves less the change in base money (as a percentage of gross domestic product).

"Lack of strain to monetary management suggest monetary authorities can continue to

BSP/ B8

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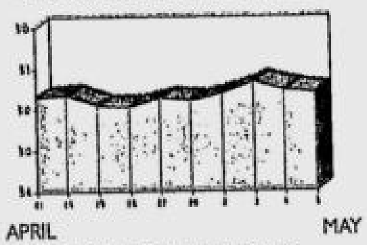

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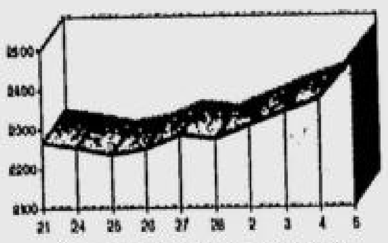

(See stock market report on Page B6)

Market seen to shed gains

ANALYSTS EXPECT THE MARKET TO SHED some of its gains this week but the stock trade sentiment remains bullish in general.

"We are not even halfway through the year, but the market has gone berserk, and has almost reached the consensus year-end target of 2,500," AB Capital Securities said in weekly roundup. "Demand is coming from foreign funds, who seemed to be unmindful of the already lofty valuations and

MARKET/ B6

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Aveo 1.5 A/T	610,000	69,000	48,166	33,005	25,595	18,214	14,592	12,715	7,310
Aveo Special Ed. 1.5 M/T	635,000	69,000	50,392	34,630	26,777	19,056	15,266	13,302	7,610
Aveo Special Ed. 1.5 A/T	675,000	79,000	53,062	36,361	28,196	20,066	16,075	14,007	8,089
Optra 1.6 L A/T	713,000	89,000	55,555	38,069	29,521	21,009	16,830	14,665	8,644
Optra 1.6 LS M/T	738,000	89,000	57,781	39,594	30,704	21,850	17,504	15,253	8,844
Optra 1.6 LS A/T	783,000	89,000	61,787	42,339	32,833	23,366	18,718	16,310	9,383
Optra Special Ed. 1.6 A/T	795,000	99,000	61,965	42,461	32,927	23,433	18,772	16,357	9,527
Optra Wagon 1.6 M/T	808,000	99,000	63,123	43,254	33,642	23,871	19,123	16,663	9,683
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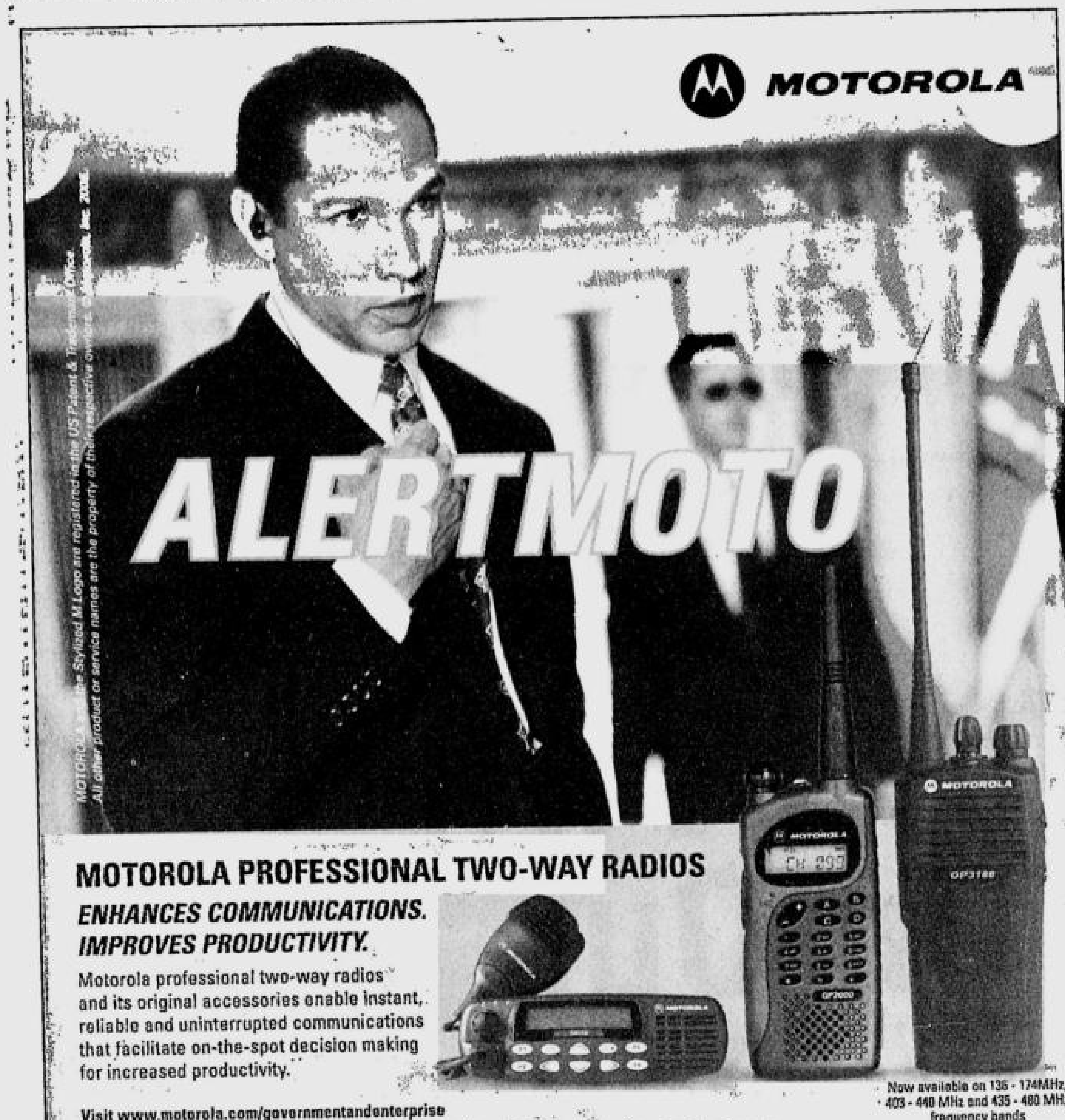

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Gov't seeks $310-M loan from World Bank

For health, education projects

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING $310 million worth of fresh program loans from the World Bank to fund priority intervention efforts for health and education.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy-making Monetary Board gave the national government the green light to negotiate for two new official development assistance facilities: $110 million for health reforms and $200 million for basic education support.

"The MB approved the loans in principle. Based on RA (Republic Act) 8182, these should be official development assistance," BSP Officer-in-Charge Diwa Guinigundo told reporters after the board meeting on Friday.

He said the two program loans were among the ODA loans prioritized by the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee during a meeting last April 4.

The $200-million loan should cover a "national program support for basic education," with the Department of Education as the implementing agency.

"It will improve the capacity and effectiveness of DepEd's coherent package of reforms to address the issues of equity, poverty and governance in financing basic education," Guinigundo said.

He said the $110-million loan for the health sector should be administered by the Department of Health.

"It will support a sustainable program for the effective targeting of the indigent," he said.

Government sources said the WB was also keen on providing the country a $450-million "fiscal strengthening" program loan this year.

With the upbeat mood on the Philippines' fiscal consolidation efforts, the WB is now very much willing to extend large-scale program lending to the country.

The World Bank has allotted up to $1.8 billion in fresh lending to the Philippines from this year to 2008, which is premised on "substantial" and "sustained" government fiscal reforms.

Official documents on the country assistance strategy mapped out by the WB for the three-year 2006-2008 period stated: "The scale of lending will be determined by progress on fiscal reforms, reflecting the overarching importance of fiscal adjustment in the short-term and the need to mitigate and manage risks."

The WB's strategy for the three-year period was still based on the medium-term Philippine development plan and had two main goals: economic growth and social inclusion. It identifies two important levers for pursuing these goals: achieving fiscal stability and improving governance.

The WB's support would cover three levels of engagement—national, local and the private sector. At the national level, the WB said its priority would be to improve governance and financing within the existing budget and would thus require improving in-country systems and processes.

Q1 debt service bill . . .

From page B1

lion was allocated for foreign liabilities.

To pay for its principal debts, the government spent P175.542 billion during the January-to-March period—more than twice the programmed P74.201 billion.

Of the amount spent to pay principal debts, P157.382 billion went to domestic obligations, while only P18.16 billion was allotted to pay off foreign liabilities.

Interest payments, one of the items included in the annual national budget, accounted for about third of the total budget for a year. These are paid in part using internal revenues and duties collected by the government. Principal debts, on the other hand, are paid mainly by proceeds from borrowings.

In January, the government sold some $2.2 billion worth of dollar- and euro-denominated bonds. The amount, which is more than half of the $4-billion foreign borrowing program for 2006, were allocated to pay off government debts and help plug the expected budget deficit for the year.

The national government has close to P4 trillion worth of debts accumulated over the years due to its annual deficits.

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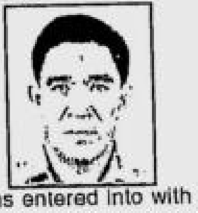

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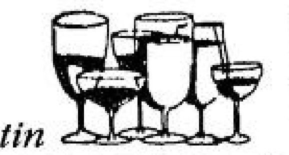

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE PRIVATE MAJORITY SHAREHOLDERS of Philcomsat Holdings Corp. have asked Malacañang to agree to dissolve the listed company to prevent further dissipation of the assets by Mike Arroyo's relatives.

The proposal was sent to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita after the PHC management walked out of the May 4 shareholders' meeting they themselves had called.

The 90-year-old president of PHC, Mike Arroyo's uncle Manuel Nieto Jr., gave credence to the claim of founding shareholder Juan Ponce Enrile that Nieto is suffering from Alzheimer's disease after Nieto reported as usual to his office Thursday morning, unaware that he was supposed to be at the Manila Golf Club to preside over the stockholders' meeting.

"He most often sick and he cannot attend any meeting," was how PHC vice president Philip Brodett described Nieto to reporters.

Even the PHC chair, Mike Arroyo's cousin Benito Araneta, and the corporate secretary, Roberto San Jose, were absent from the shareholders' meeting.

This left Brodett, and another director-lawyer, Luis Lokin Jr., recently suspended by the Supreme Court, to orchestrate the tumultuous proceedings.

The fiery Ponce Enrile erupted after Brodett gave the senator—who wanted to know how much of the company's money is still left and the identity of custodian banks—not only a brush-off, but also walked out on him and the meeting altogether.

Even board director Enrique "Henry" Locsin could not answer the question, despite being a Malacañang/Good Government nominee. Locsin's first cousin, Roberto Abad, also sits on the PHC board.

According to previous talks with Lokin, PHC had about P1.2 billion in cash when Araneta was appointed by then President Estrada.

The cash thereafter dwindled by P390 million after the Araneta board "lent" the amount to an Araneta cousin, Antonio Araneta, who subsequently declared his incapacity to repay the loan.

Lokin had admitted that the bulk of the money, which had dwindled to about P800 million, had at one point been deposited in Bankwise, despite the thrift bank's reported financial problems.

Incidentally, Brodett was seen meeting with PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio, Commissioner Ricardo Abcede, Mike Arroyo's lawyer Jesus Santos and another unidentified individual at the Peninsula Tabac Room Friday night.

Along with the Malacañang nominees, the PHC shareholders have scheduled a make-or-break meeting tomorrow amid the expiry of PHC corporate life on May 10. Before the backdoor entry of the sequestered Philcomsat Group, PHC was known as Liberty Mines.

iBank parachutes

INTERNATIONAL Exchange Bank president Ramon Sy reported a total of 14 million iBank shares under his name as of end-2005.

By end-March, Sy's holdings went down to only 10.8 million, with no disclosure filed so far as to where the 3.2 million shares had gone.

With Union Bank offering to acquire all iBank shares at P42.50 per—almost 2.25 times the end-2005 book value of P18.92 a share—the 3.2-million Sy shares unaccounted for are worth P136 million in all.

According to the grapevine, Sy holds the shares of the other senior bank officials as part of the compensation package Sy had negotiated for their group as industrial partners when the bank opened in 1995.

One trail of the 3.2-million share mystery could lead to executive vice president Nilo Pacheco who showed up, for the first time, in the first quarter 2006 shareholders list as the beneficial owner of 1.5 million shares.

Despite his reduced shareholdings, Sy can still manage to flash his trademark laugh even all the way to Union Bank's new Ortigas headquarters should the nattily dressed banker decide to cash out, with his pile now worth P459 million.

Derailed complaint

AFTER filing a civil complaint to annul the Northrail contracts, UP Professor Herminio Harry Roque Jr. flew to the United States without a by-your-leave, leaving an exasperated judge to indefinitely suspend the hearings.

The principal plaintiff's absence was all the more aggravated after his lawyer during late

COCKTALES/ B5

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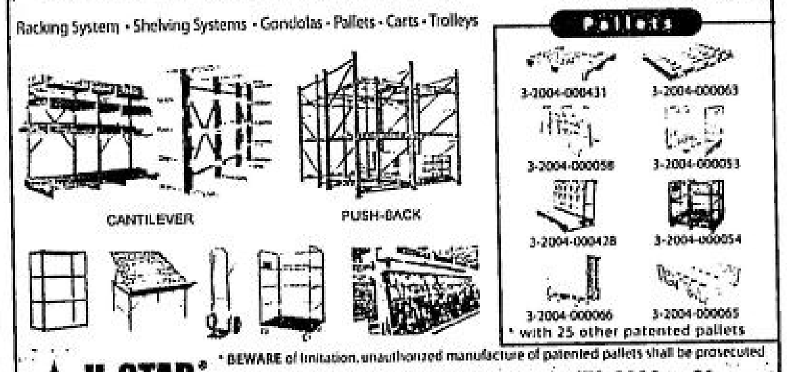

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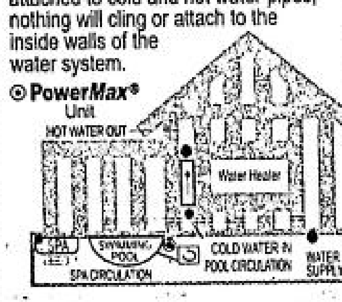

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PELAC Global Bond Fund	US$ 1.0735	US$ 1.0716

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NAVPU as of	May 4, 2006	YTD -ROI
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*Inception Date 3/17/06 **Inception Date 4/08/06
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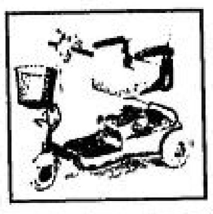

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CHAMPACA BLDG. 2
Salcedo Village, Makati City

OFFICE CONDO W/PARKING

FLOOR AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
450.90 sqm.	P 25,000,000.00
450.90 sqm.	P 25,000,000.00
455.00 sqm.	P 25,000,000.00

VILLA ENCARNATION MARIES VILLAGE
Antipolo City
(near Cherry Foodorama/Maries School)

RESIDENTIAL LOTS

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
72 sqm	P 180,000.00
73 sqm.	P 182,500.00
133 sqm.	P 332,500.00

BELMONT SOUTH PARK TOWNHOMES
UNITED HILLS SUBD.
(inside United Parañaque)
Brgy. San Dionisio, Parañaque
TOWNHOUSE

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
95.34 sqm.	P 953,400.00
129.46 sqm.	P 1,294,600.00
141.00 sqm.	P 1,410,000.00
182.45 sqm.	P 1,824,500.00

MAYLAND SUBDIVISION
(near North Expressway)
Lawang Bato, Valenzuela City

VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT

LOT AREA	MINIMUM BID PRICE
114 sqm.	P 363,676.06
151 sqm.	P 366,866.20
163 sqm	P 519,992.96
176 sqm.	P 561,464,79

EAGLE RIDGE GOLF & RESIDENTIAL ESTATE
Cavite City
(within Golf Estate)

VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT

LOT AREA	MINIMUM BID PRICE
427 sqm.	P 1,152,900.00
618 sqm.	P 1,668,600.00
722 sqm.	P 1,949,400.00

CRYSTAL AIRE
Gen. Trias, Cavite

HOUSE AND LOT

LOT AREA	FLOOR AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
80 sqm.	31.60 sqm.	P 398,000.00
80 sqm.	38.00 sqm.	P 430,000.00
80 sqm.	48.0 sqm.	P 480,000.00
100 sqm.	39.10 sqm.	P 600,000.00

RODEO HILLS SUBD. ESTATE
Alfonso, Cavite

RESIDENTIAL FARM LOTS

LOT AREA	MINIMUM BID PRICE
300 sqm.	P 450,000.00
348 sqm.	P 626,400.00
407 sqm.	P 732,600.00
604 sqm.	P 845,600..00
1,083 sqm.	P 1,841,100.00

CAPITOL HILLS EXEC. SUBD.
Phase 2
Trece Martires City, Cavite

RESIDENTIAL LOTS

LOT AREA	MINIMUM BID PRICE
39 sqm.	P 62,400.00
47 sqm.	P 75,200.00
52 sqm.	P 83,200.00
62 sqm.	P 99,200.00
70 sqm.	P 112,000.00

MANILA SOUTHWOODS
(Phase 1&2)
Carmona, Cavite
VACANT RESIDENTIAL GOLF ESTATE LOT

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
441 sqm.	P 1,323,000.00
455 sqm.	P 1,365,000.00
486 sqm.	P 1,458,000.00
501 sqm.	P 1,503,000.00
692 sqm.	P 2,076,000.00

SPRING HOMES SUBD.
(Phase III)
Brgy. Bucal, Calamba, Laguna

VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL LOT

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
102 sqm.	P 267,122.12
118 sqm.	P 309,023.63
124 sqm.	P 324,736.69
152 sqm.	P 398,064.33
192 sqm.	P 502,818.10

PINEVILLE SUBDIVISION
(near NLEX Meycauayan Exit)
Lawa Meycauayan, Bulacan

VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL LOT

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
208 sqm.	P 416,000.00
224 sqm.	P 448,000.00
250 sqm.	P 500,000.00
265 sqm.	P 630,000.00
273 sqm.	P 546,000.00

Near Mc Arthur Hi-way
Saluysoy, MEYCAUAYAN, Bulacan

VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL LOT

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
197 sqm.	P 394,000.00
203 sqm.	P 406,000.00
232 sqm.	P 464,000.00

LA MAREA SUBDIVISION
San Pedro
(near SLEX-San Pedro exit)

VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL LOT

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
135 sqm.	P 506,250.00
183 sqm.	P 596,250.00
211 sqm.	P 791,250.00
289 sqm.	P 1,083,750.00
374 sqm.	P 1,589,500.00

ROYAL PINES WEST TAGAYTAY
(Early American Themed Subdivision)

VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL LOT

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
536 sqm.	P 2,680,000.00
539 sqm.	P 2,695,000.00
542 sqm.	P 2,710,000.00
546 sqm.	P 2,730,000.00
567 sqm.	P 2,835,000.00

THE SHANG HAI TOWER
San Antonio Village, MAKATI

RESIDENTIAL CONDO

FLOOR AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
37.38 sqm.	P 1,009,290.00
52.52 sqm.	P 1,418,040.00
70.83 sqm.	P 1,912,410.00
87.67 sqm.	P 2,367,090.00

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL

ATB_ANT001 2 STRY. HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 410 sqm.
(near of Mille Luce, Crown Asia)
Macopa St., NAYONG SILANG SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 2,800,000.00

ATB_ANT003 RESIDENTIAL LOT-
GOLDEN HILLS SUBD.
(near Unciano Medical Center)

L.A.	Min. Bid Price
1,400 sqm.	P 2,800,000.00
1,500 sqm	P 3,000,000.00

CSB_ANT001 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 3,759 sqm.
BRGY. CUPANG
Min. Bid Price: P2,100,000.00

PREM_ANT 001 WAREHOUSE
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 826 sqm.
(near Sumulong Hway / Antipolo Church)
Quezon Ave., Ext., BRGY. SAN JOSE
Min. Bid Price: P 7,500,000.00

PREM_ANT 002 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 132 sqm.
Interior Rd. JOSEFINA SUBD., Mambungan
Min. Bid Price: P 641,450.00

PREM_ANT 007 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. (view of Valley Golf Subd.)
Alaska St., PALOS VERDES EXEC. VILL.
Phase 1-A dela Paz, Antipolo
Min. Bid Price: P 1,300,000.00

PREM_ANT 012 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 171 sqm. (near Lores Market & STI)
Pound St., LORES SUBD.,Balimbing
Min. Bid Price: P 427,500.00

CAINTA, RIZAL

ANC_CNT 012- RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 471sqm.
Afables St., VISTA VERDE
(near Cainta Mkt/ Robinsons Mall)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

CSB_CNT002 IND'L WAREHOUSE
L.A 3,828sqm. F.A.3,057sqm
Along Tuazon Avenue,
VALLEY GOLF SUBD.,Cainta
Minimum Bid Price: P 34,335,000.00

CALOOCAN

ANC_CAL_005- HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 301 sqm. F.A. 50.5 sqm.
62 Camaro St., BRIXTONVILLE Subd.
(w/ dev. roads Approx. 500m fr. malls)
Min. Bid Price : P 1,800,000.00

ATB_CAL002 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 155 sqm.
PILAR VILLAGE SUBD.,
Min. Bid Price: P 810,000.00

CCL_CAL005 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 543 sqm.
Carmel St. MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 814,500.00

EWB_CAL001 3 COMML/RSDL LOT
L.A. 5,915 sqm.
BAGUMBONG (near Saronay Subd.)
Min. Bid Price: P 7,689,500.00

KPI_CAL257 - 4 STRY. APARTMENT
L.A. 94 sqm. F.A. 305.82 sqm.
PANGANIBAN ST., Bo. Calaanan
(near THE OUR LADY OF GRACE CHURCH)
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,000,000.00

PREM_CAL 015 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 74 sqm.
BO. BAGUMBONG (in front of Evergreen Subd.)
Min. Bid Price. P 1,800,000.00

LAS PIÑAS

ESB_LSP001 2 STRY. HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 204 sqm. F.A. 256 sqm.
#20 Jhocson St., BF EXECUTIVE VILL.,
Almanza (near Alabang)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000.00

KPI_LSP86 - 2 SINGLE STRY. COMMEL BLDG.
L.A. 594 sqm. F.A. 104 / 61 sqm.
ALABANG, ZAPOTE RD (near UCPB /
Jollibee Zapote)
Minimum Bid Price: P 10,000,000.00

PREM_LSP 014 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 182.5 sqm.
(near RFC Mall)
SANTOS VILL.,Pulang Lupa I
Min. Bid Price: P 1,600,000.00

PREM_LSP 036 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 387 sqm. F.A. 567.82 sqm.
(near Christ The King Parish Chapel)
SAN ISIDRO VILL. Pamplona 1
Min. Bid Price: P 3,860,000.00

MALABON

ATB_MLB006 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. (near Goldendale Subd.)
Northern Side of DOÑA VICTORIA ST
Min. Bid Price: P 3,600,000.00

CSB_MLB003 WAREHOUSE BLDG.
L.A 1,000sqm F.A 393sqm
BRGY. PANGHULO (near Silver Swan MFG)
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,500,000.00

MAKATI

EWB_MKT002 OFFICE CONDO w/ PARKING
F.A. 265.63 sqm. (finished unit)
THE WORLD CENTER TOWER
330 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave, Salcedo Vill.
Min. Bid Price: P 12,353,350.00

ESB_MKT002 RSDL/COMML LOT
L.A. 578 sqm.
(near Vito Cruz/Pasong Tamo)
Davila St. and Mola St., M. Dela Paz Vill.
Min. Bid Price: P 9,000,000.00

OSB_MKT001 - OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 277.868/ 283.342 sqm.
(w/ 5 Parking Slot)
EQUITABLE TOWER CONDO.
Paseo de Roxas
Min. Bid Price: P 36,000,000.00

PREM_MKT 017 RESIDENTIAL CONDO.
F.A. 49 sqm. (near Makati Medical Hospital)
CITYLAND and DELA ROSA Condominium
Min. Bid Price: P 1,550,000.00

PREM_MKT 019 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 38.33 sqm. (near Makati Sports Club)
MAKATI EXEC. CENTER CONDO
Alfonso St. cor. Herrera St., Salcedo Vill.
Min. Bid Price: P 2,200,000.00

TPFP_MKT001 VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT
HOOVER ST., Bgy. Pio Del Pilar

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
244 sqm.	P 4,636,000 00
247 sqm.	P 4,693,000.00

RYL_MKT004 RESIDENTIAL. CONDO.
F.A. 179 sqm. (near Shell-Maya)
LE METROPOLE CONDO.
H.V. Dela Costa, SALCEDO VILLAGE
Min Bid.Price. P6,265,000.00

MANILA

KPI_MLA147 - 2 STRY. RSDL BLDG.
L.A. 172 sqm. F.A. 156 sqm.
(w/ Factory)
Clemente St., cor. Gabriel St., TONDO
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,000,000.00

LSB_MLA001 - COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 1,328.06 sqm
(near Sebastian Church / CEU, La Consolacion, Holy Spirit & San Beda)
Bilibid Viejo St., QUIAPO
Min. Bid Price: P24,000,000.00

PREM_MLA 016 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 140 sqm. F.A. 360 sqm.
(near Brgy. Hall of Quericada)
A. Almeda St. QUERICADA, Tondo
Min. Bid Price: P 1,816,000.00

MARIKINA

PREM_MRK 009 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 279 sqm. F.A. 335.75 sqm.
Yellow Stone Park St., cor. Overland Park St.
PARKLAND ESTATE SUBD. Malanday
(near Concepcion Church)
Min. Bid Price. P 2,000,000.00

MONTALBAN, RIZAL

ANC_MNT 013- RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 240 sqm.
MARILOU SUBD., San Isidro
Min. Bid Price : P 900,500.00

PREM_MNT 013 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 574 sqm. (near San Jose Market)
YAKAL ST. Brgy. San Jose Rodriguez
Min. Bid Price: P 1,050,000.00

MUNTINLUPA

EWB_MUN003 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 1,524 sqm. (near Festival Mall)
FILINVEST CORP. City, Alabang
(along Spectrum Midway & Singapura Lane)
Min. Bid Price. P 60,000,000.00

PREM_MUN 020 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 432 sqm. (near Cityhall of Muntinlupa)
Orchids St., SOUTH GREENHEIGHTS
Min. Bid Price: P 1,700,000.00

ORTIGAS CENTER, PASIG

KPI_PSG240 - OFFICE CONDO.
F.A. 86.17 sqm (near SM megamall)
ONE MAGNIFICENT MILE TOWER CONDO.
San Miguel Ave. Ortigas Center
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,500,000.00

OSB_PSG002 - OFFICE CONDO w/ PARKING
F.A. 109 sqm. (near SM Megamall)
TEKTITE TOWERS CONDO.
Exchange Rd. Ortigas Center
Min. Bid Price: P 4,400,000.00

RYL_PSG001 RSDL CONDO. w/ parking
AIC GOLD TOWER, Emerald Ave., cor.
Garnet Ave. (back of Robinsons Galleria)

F.A.	Min Bid Price
127.77 sqm.	P 3,846,000 00
127.77 sqm	P4,800,000.00(w/antipolo view)

PARAÑAQUE

EWB_PRQ004 RESIDENTIAL CONDO
F.A. 356.61 sqm.
CLEVELAND TOWER. Pacific Ave.,
cor. Ocean Drive Asiaworld City
Min. Bid Price: P 16,000,000.00

KPI¬_PRQ266 - RESIDENTIAL UNIT
F.A. 105 sqm. (near Baclaran Church)
BAYVIEW TOWER 1, Roxas Blvd.
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,500,000.00

KPI_PRQ211 - 2 STRY. RSDL BLDG.
L.A. 518 sqm. F.A. 380 sqm.
(near Comm'l Area)
Rainbow St., Bricktown Subd.,
MOONWALK VILL.
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,500,000.00

LSB_PAR002 - RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 234 sqm.(near Total Gas Station & Multi- National Village) Brgy. WAWA
Min. Bid Price: P700,000.00

QUEZON CITY

ANC_QC 014- HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 480 sqm. F.A. 500 sqm.
WHITE PLAINS SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 18,000,000.00

ATB_QC009 2 STRY. HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 198 sqm. F.A. 170 sqm.
(near SM North Edsa)
ALIBANGBANG ST., Bago Bantay
Min. Bid Price: P 1,800,000.00

ATB_QC010 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 37 sqm. F.A. 51.48 sqm.
Roque St.,VERDANT HILLS
Tandang Sora (near NAPOCOR Subd.)
Min. Bid Price: P 550,000.00

ATB_QC013 2 STRY 5-DOOR APRT.
L.A. 677.50 sqm. F.A. 859 sqm.
(near Quezon City Hall)
Mayaman St., UP VILLAGE
Min. Bid Price: P 10,000,000.00

ATB_QC014 4 UNITS TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 51 48 sqm. F.A. 239 (nr Tandang Sora)
HAPPY HOMES II, TOWNHOUSE
Min. Bid Price: P 700,000.00

CSB_QC004 OFFICE/ RSDL CONDO
F.A 33.30sqm (near kalayaan plaza & at the back of City Hall)
SAN JOSE CONDO. II , Sikatuna Village
Minimum Bid Price: P 600,000.00

EWB_QC005 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 120 sqm. (near Batasan & Sandigang Bayan)
SPRING HEIGHTS, Filinvest II
Min. Bid Price: P 420,000.00

EWB_QC006 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. (near SM Fairview)
Malipajo St., NEOPOLITAN SUBD. Fairview
Min. Bid Price: P 1,200,000.00

ESB_QC003 3 STRY. COMML TWNHSE
L.A. 48 sqm. F.A. 96 sqm.
18th Ave.VILLA MARIE EXECUTIVE
TOWNHOMES, Cubao
Min. Bid Price: P 1,950,000.00

KPI_QC267 - OFFICE CONDO.
F.A. 54.04 sqm. (near Gateway Mall)
REGALIA PARK, TOWER B.,
Edsa cor. P. Tuazon, Cubao
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,600,000.00

KPI_QC315 - 3 STRY. BLDG w/ PENTHOUSE
L.A. 2,183 sqm. F.A. 3,580 sqm.
(Keppel Bank Bldg.)
E. RODRIGUEZ AVE. (near Cubao MRT)
Minimum Bid Price: P 130,000,000.00

MU_QC001 TOWNHOUSE (under CCT)
NEW MANILA CREST 2
10TH Street, New Manila (near Gilmore Ave.)

F.A.	MIN. BID PRICE
343.125 sqm.	P 13,400,000.00
343.125 SQM.	P 13,800,000.00

SAN JUAN

CSB_SJ005 - 5STORY BLDG.
L.A 574sqm F.A 3,554 (44% FINISHED)
(Near Xavier & ICA)
Hardboard cor. B. Padilla St.
LITTLE BAGUIO
Minimum Bid Price: P 24,858,926.74

KPI_SJ118 - 4 STRY. TOWNHOUSE
F.A. 280 sqm. (w/ Parking)
LUXOR VILLAS TOWNHOMES,
Santolan Road. (near Xavier & ICA Schools)
Minimum Bid Price: P 6,000,000.00

KPI_SJ284 - 1 STRY. OFFICE BLDG.
L.A. 490 sqm. F.A. 185 sqm.
N.DOMINGO St.
(near Agora Mall & SM Center point)
Minimum Bid Price: P 18,000,000.00

KPI_SJ193 - RESIDENTIAL BLDG.
L.A. 250 sqm. F.A. 154.10 sqm.
G. REYES ST., Batong Bato
(near Aurora Blvd/ MRT STN.)
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,000,000.00

SAN JUAN-GREENHILLS

RYL_SJ003 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 229.10 sqm.
28/F ATLANTA CONDOMINIUM
Annapolis St, (near Greenhills Shopping Center)
Min Bid Price: P 7,200,000.00

TAGUIG

PREM_TAG 024 RSDL LOT w/ IMPRV.
L.A. 113 sqm. F.A. 219 sqm.
(near MACRO, Sucat)
Aquino St., UPPER BICUTAN
Min. Bid Price: P 1,564,350.00

PREM_TAG 025 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 201 sqm. (near Cityhall of Taguig)
Int. J.P. Rizal St., Juan Luna, USUSAN
Min. Bid Price: P 804,000.00

TAYTAY, RIZAL

CCL_TAY004 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 168 sqm.
PALMERA HOMES
Min. Bid Price: P 420,000.00

EWB_TAY009 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 130 sqm.
(near San Beda College, Taytay)
HIGHLANDS POINTE Dolores
Min. Bid Price: P 700,000.00

KPI_TAY258 - 27 UNITS RSDL APART. BLDG.
L.A. 677 sqm. F.A.605.16 sqm.
Leonardo cor. M. Borja St.,
BRGY. DOLORES (near Taytay Market)
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,800,000.00

PREM_TAY 011 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 155 sqm. F.A. 130.50 sqm.
(near Taytay Market)
Ma. Clara St., & Pag-asa, BRGY. STA. ANA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,465,000.00

VALENZUELA

ANC_VAL 004- HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 197.14 sqm. F.A. 75 sqm.
Rambutan St., Gen. T. De leon
(near ZENMAR MARKET)
Min. Bid Price : P 1,100,000.00

LSB_VAL003 - 3 STOREY RESIDENTIAL/ COMMERCIAL BLDG.
L.A. 170 sqm. (near Plastic Housing)
Cor. Pinagbayanan & Concepsion St.
Bo. Canumay, Valenzuela City
Min. Bid Price: P800,000.00

LSB_VAL004 - RESIDENTIAL LOT
Jasmin Street, BALANGKAS
(near Paaralan ng Arcadio Deato)

L.A.	Min. Bid Price:
235 sqm	411,250.00
258 sqm.	451,500.00

PREM_VAL 026 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 287 sqm. F.A. 190 sqm.
DE CASTRO SUBD. , Pasoe de Blas,
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_VAL 027 SCHOOL BLDG
MARY MOTHER IMMACULATE SCHOOL
L.A. 5,293 sqm. F.A. 1,689.60 sqm.
Int. MAYSAN ROAD
Min. Bid Price: P 33,000,000.00

WBI_VAL028 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 50sqm
MAPULANG LUPA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,120,000.00

BAGUIO CITY / BENGUET

ASB_BAG001RESIDENTIAL LOT
Lot 15-A Bo. Takian, LA TRINIDAD

L.A.	Min. Bid Price
500 sqm.	P 200,000.00
533 sqm.	P 213,200.00

ATB_BAG024 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 418 sqm. (along National Road)
Magnolia St., MONTERRAZAS VILL.,
Min. Bid Price: P 627,000.00

CSB_BAG006 COMMERCIAL BLDG
L.A 1,705sqm F.A 1,500sqm
Kilometer 5, TRINIDAD ROAD
Minimum Bid Price: P37,823,947.50

KPI_BAG010 - 3 STRY. TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 120 sqm F.A. 162 sqm.
EAGLE CREST TOWNHOUSE
Bakekang Norte Rd. (near Catholic Seminary)
Min. Bid Price : P 1,500,000.00/ Unit

BATANGAS

ANC_BAT 008- RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 750 sqm.
LIPA COUNTRYSIDE SUBD., Bulacnin, Lipa
Min. Bid Price : P 2,000,000.00

ANC_BAT 009- COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 2,594 sqm. (near COMM'L AREA)
Trapiche Road, TANAUAN
Min. Bid Price: P 7,000,000.00

ATB_BAT021 2 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 312 sqm. (near SM Batangas City)
GOLDEN COUNTRY HOMES, Alangilan
Min. Bid Price: P 898,560.00

CCL_BAT011 AGRI/RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 22,360 sqm. (along Nat'l Hway)
BRGY. POOK, TAAL
Min. Bid Price: P 8,944,000.00

EWB_BAT010 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 10,389 sqm. (near Lipa Robinsons)
LIPA-IBAAN ROAD, Bo. Sampaguita, Lipa City
Min. Bid Price: P 7,272,300.00

KPI_BAT269 - RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 10,000 sqm. (near Robinson Lipa)
BRGY. AMILAO
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,000,000.00

KPI_BAT233 - 3sty. SCHOOL BLDG.
L.A. 1,113 sqm. F.A. 2,473.82 sqm.
(Inside Tanauan Town Proper)
Brgy 2 Poblacion, TANAUAN
Minimum Bid Price: P 13,000,000.00

LDB_BAT001 RESIDENTIAL/ AGRI LOT
L.A. 16,000 sqm.(Near Capitol)
Brgy. Bolbok, LIPA CITY
Min. Bid Price: P5,120,000.00

TPFP_BAT003 VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 750 sqm (2 lots available)
LIPA COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE
Bgy. Bulacnin, Lipa City
(near soon to rise SM Lipa)
Min Bid Price: P 2,025,000.00 per lot

TPFP_BAT005 VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 642 sqm. (along beach area)
Driftwood Lane, TALI BEACH SUBD.
Bgy Balaitique, Nasugbu
Min Bid Price: P 2,889,000.00

BULACAN

ANC_BUL 011- HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 4,687 sqm. F.A. 120 sqm./ 80 sqm.
(near the church of Brgy. Parada)
Along National Rd.goin to SJDM
Brgy. Parada, STA. MARIA
Min. Bid Price: P 3,000,000.00

ATB_BUL027 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 600 sqm.
(near Divine Mercy Church)
Bgy Prenza 1, MARILAO
Min. Bid Price: P 650,000.00

EWB_BUL012 INDT'L LOT
L.A. 39,811 sqm. (near Sta. Maria Church)
STA. MARIA INDUSTRIAL PARK
Brgy. Balasing, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 99,527,500.00

KPI_BUL291 - RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 78 sqm.
KABUKIRAN HOMES SUBD.
Brgy. Tabe, Guiguinto
Minimum Bid Price: P 127,000.00

PREM_BUL 030 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 554 sqm. F.A. 55 sqm.
(near Pulonggubat Elem. School)
Mercado Ext. cor. Daang Bakal,
BRGY. TIAONG PULONGGUBAT, Guiguinto
Min. Bid Price: P 900,000.00

PREM_BUL 031 HOUSE & LOT w/ PIGPEN
L.A. 1,030 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
BRGY. SAN VICENTE, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 1,300,000.00

PREM_BUL 032 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 1,100 sqm. (near Pio Road)
Int. San Marcos Rd.,
BRGY. SAN MARCOS, Calumpit
Min. Bid Price: P 400,000.00

PREM_BUL 033 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 729 sqm. (nr Brgy. Chapel of San Jose)
Buencamino St., BRGY. SAN JOSE,
San Miguel
Min. Bid Price: P 900,000.00

WBI_BUL003 RSDL LOT w/ BUILDING
L.A. 2,384 sqm.
Inaon, PULILAN (at the back of Inaon Hatchery)
Min. Bid Price: P450,000.00

WBI_BUL005 RSDL LOT w/ BLDG.
L.A. 1000 sqm. (near Bocaue exit)
Bagbaguin, STA. MARIA
Min. Bid Price: P5,500,000.00

WBI_BUL006 PASTURE LAND
L.A. 15,846/19,032sqm
(near Alagao Elem. School)
ALAGAO San Ildefonso
Min. Bid Price: P1,200,000.00

WBI_BUL007 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 20,571 sqm w/ BLDG.
(near Sulucan Elem. School)
Sulucan, ANGAT
Min. Bid Price: P4,500,000.00

WBI_BUL008 RESIDENTIAL LOT (various titles)
L.A. 6,775 sqm. (near Mc Arthur Hi-way)
MADALENA SUBD. Balagtas
Min. Bid Price: P13,550,000.00

WBI_BUL009 RICE FIELD
L.A. 3,659 sqm. (Along National Road)
Peñabatan, PULILAN
Min. Bid Price: P1,425,000.00

WBI_BUL010 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 15,780 sqm (near Sta. Monica Parish Church). Laoag, ANGAT
Min. Bid Price: P355,000.00

WBI_BUL011 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 502 sqm (inside Magdalena Subd.)
San Juan, BALAGTAS
Min. Bid Price: P 1,104,400.00

WBI_BUL012 RICEFIELD
L.A. 4,528 sqm. (near Pulilan Market)
Taal, PULILAN
Min. Bid Price: P1,810,000.00

WBI_BUL013 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 877/397 sqm.(near CEU, Malolos)
Longos, MALOLOS
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000.00

CAVITE

ATB_CVT033 WAREHOUSE
L.A. 7,637 sqm. F.A 1,050 sqm.
(near Shell Gas Station)
A. Soriano Highway, Bgy. Sahod Ulan, TANZA
Min. Bid Price: P 11,000,000.00

CSB_CVT007 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 279.5sqm F.A 108sqm
Binakayan, KAWIT (near Binakayan Market)
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,362,672.58

CSB_CVT008 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 702 sqm.
ORCHARD GOLD & COUNTRY CLUB
RSD'L ESTATE Alyssum St., DASMARIÑAS
Min. Bid Price: P3,685,500.00

CSB_CVT009 RAW LAND
L.A. 18,611 sqm.
(near Metroplolitan Terrace)
Along Brgy. Rd., De Ocampo TRECE MARTIREZ
Min. Bid Price: P 13,472,265.80

CSB_CVT010 RAW LAND
L.A 2,869 sqm (near Fr. Michael Duncher School)
POBLACION, SILANG
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,774,183.33

CCL_CVT014 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A 2,666 sqm. (near SM & Robinsons Dasma.)
Duhat St , GREENFIELDS SUBD., Dasma
Min. Bid Price: P 3,349,200.00

EWB_CVT018 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 50 sqm. F.A. 31 sqm. (near La Salle-Dasma.)
WINDWARD HILLS, Burol, Dasmariñas
Min. Bid Price: P 345,000.00

EWB_CVT019 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 100 sqm. (near EPZA)
RIDGE EAST SPRINGFIELD VIEW, Tanza
Min. Bid Price: P 300,000.00

KPI_CVT103 - RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 192 sqm.
TOWN & COUNTRY DASMARIÑAS,
Brgy. Burol (near LA SALLE / SM DASMA)
Minimum Bid Price: P 600,000.00

LDB_CVT002 SCHOOL
L.A. 2,810 sqm. F.A. 3,583 sqm.
(near Cavite State Colleges)
Dalahican, NOVELETA
Min. Bid Price: P17,280,000.00

OSB_CVT003 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 65 sqm. F.A. 27 sqm.
Fernandez St., Woodsite 3,
Brgy. Pasong Buaya II, IMUS
Min. Bid Price: P 700,000.00

PREM_CVT 034 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 300 sqm.
(near Molino Wet & Dry Market)
GREEN VALLEY SUBD.San Nicolas Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 450,000.00

PREM_CVT 035 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 159 sqm.
(near SM Molino)
Queensview St. Area A QUEENSNOW SUBD.,
Brgy. Molino Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 1,100,000.00

PREM_CVT 038 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 150 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
(near GMA Town Proper)
Poblacion 2, GMA
Min. Bid Price: P 630,000.00

PREM_CVT 039 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 477 sqm.
CITYLAND HEIGHTS,
Bo. Ulong Tubig, Carmona
Min. Bid Price: P 700,000.00

PREM_CVT 041 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 88 / 49 sqm.
(near Brgy. Hall of Sto. Niño)
BRGY. STO. NIÑO (Area 1)
Bagong Bayan, (DBB), Dasmariñas
Min Bid Price: P 800,000.00

PREM_CVT 042 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 180sqm. (near MAYNILAD Office)
VILLANUEVA SUBD.
Brgy. Real, Salinas,Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 900,00.00

PREM_CVT 043 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 595 sqm. (near Monterey Farm)
Ruby St., STATELAND SUBD.
Buenavista, Gen. Trias
Min Bid Price: P 600,000 00

ISABELA

ATB_ISA039 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 961 sqm.
(near De Vera Gen. Hospital)
CALLE VALENTIN,
Bo. Buenavista, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price: P 864,900.00

ATB_ISA041 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 3,306 sqm. (near Valley Homes Subd.)
PATUL ROAD, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price: P 1,140,000.00

ATB_ISA042 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 316 sqm. (near Plandel Heights Subd.)
BO. PLARIDEL, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price: P 190,000.00

ATB_ISA045 STRY. COMMERCIAL BLDG.
L.A. 853 sqm. F.A. 171.90 sqm.
(infront Shell Gas Station)
CITY ROAD POBLACION, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price: P 10,000,000.00

CCL_ISA016 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 441 sqm.
(near Cabagan Public Market)
Bo. Ligao, CABAGAN
Min. Bid Price. P 330,750 00

LAGUNA

EWB_LGN021 RESIDENTIAL LOT
LA RESIDENCIA, Don Jose, Sta. Rosa
(near Ayala Sta. Rosa)

L.A.	Min. Bid Price
150 sqm.	P 750,000.00
180 sqm.	P 900,000.00

EWB_LGN023 AGRI LOT
L.A. 10,680 sqm. (near Caliraya)
Along Km. 101, CAVINTI-LUMBAN RD.
Brgy. Lewin, Lumban
Min. Bid Price: P 15,000,000.00

EWB_LGN024 AGRI LOT
L.A. 37,874 sqm. (near Caliraya)
Along Km. 109, CAVINTI-LUMBAN RD.
Brgy. East Talaongan, Cavinti
Min Bid Price: P 11,500,000.00

EWB_LGN027 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 89 sqm. (near Filinvest Subd.)
PARKSPRING SUBD., San Pedro
Min. Bid Price: P 445,000.00

EWB_LGN028 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 120 sqm. (near Batino Exit)
PUNTA ALTEZA, Calamba
Min. Bid Price: P 540,000.00

ESB_LGN005 2 STRY. HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 551 sqm. F.A. 410 sqm.
Macopa St.,GARCIA SUBD., Biñan
Min. Bid Price: P 2,800,000.00

ESB_LGN006 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 153 sqm. F.A. 50 sqm.
COOP VILLAGE, Brgy. Lamut II, Calauan
Min. Bid Price: P 200,000.00

KPI_LGN114 - RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 841 sqm. (near Narra Town Site)
Bo. San Vicente, SAN PEDRO
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,200,000.00

LBA_LGN 001 2 STRY. HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 208 sqm. F.A. 370 sqm. (w/ 5 brand new aircon)
LAGUNA BEL AIR, Sta. Rosa
Min. Bid Price: 5,670,000.00

LDB_LGN005 COMML LOT w/ Imprvm't
L. A. 4,000 sqm. (Along National Hi-way Bus Terminal)
Brgy. Pagsawitan, STA. CRUZ
Min Bid Price: P25,912,000.00

LDB_LGN006 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 392 sqm.(Town Proper)
P. Guevarra St., STA. CRUZ
Min. Bid Price: P6,000,000.00

LDB_LGN007 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 1,440 sqm. (Beside La Residencia)
Brgy. Don Jose, STA. ROSA
Min. Bid Price: P17,280,000.00

LDB_LGN008 RSDL/ COMML LOT
L.A. 818 sqm.
(below View Deck, Near City Hall)
Lakeview Subd., SAN PABLO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P3,075,680.00

LDB_LGN009 HOUSE & LOT(Unfinished)
L.A. 159 sqm (Int. of Metroville Subd)
Brgy. Pooc,STA. ROSA
Min. Bid Price: P695,200.00

PREM_LGN 045 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. (near Rexfort Ricemill)
Muñoz Compound BRGY. CASILE Biñan
Min. Bid Price: P 400,000.00

PREM_LGN 046 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 250 sqm. F.A. 160 sqm.
(near Majayjay Elem. School)
P.Zamora St., Brgy. San Miguel
Poblacion, MAJAYJAY
Min. Bid Price: P 800,000.00

PREM_LGN 047 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,366 sqm F.A. 918 sqm. (nr DPWH)
MONSERATT SUBD. Brgy. Callos
Sto. Angel Norte, Sta. Cruz
Min. Bid Price: P 8,500,000.00

PREM_LGN 049 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 257 75 sqm.(nr DPWH)
Purok 3 Masapang National H-way
BRGY. MASAPANG VICTORIA
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000.00

WBI_LGN022 RICELAND (6 titles)
L.A. 20,566sqm. (Along National Hi-way)
BULILAN NORTE/ SUR, PILA
Min. Bid Price: 23,138,000.00

WBI_LGN011 POULTRY FARM
L.A. 10,001sqm. (Beside Town Proper)
PAGALANGAN, Victoria
Min. Bid Price: P 8,150,000.00

NUEVA ECIJA

ASB_NE010 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A.7,861 sqm. (near NFA)
Maharlika H-way, Brgy. Maligaya, MUÑOZ
Min. Bid Price: P 3,930,500.00

ASB_NE011 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 3,729 sqm. (Town Proper)
Maharlika H-way Aban 1st
SAN JOSE CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 7,185,100.00

WBI_NE018 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 475 sqm. (near Pacific Mall)
LAKEWOOD SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 2,030,650.00

WBI_NE019 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 540 sqm.
(near Green Bucks Credit Investor)
VILLA BENITA SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 1,128,600.00

WBI_NE020 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 3,733 sqm. (near Papaya Elem. Sch)
SAN ANTONIO
Min. Bid Price: P 990,000 00

PAMPANGA

ASB_PAM015 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 400 sqm.
Sun Valley Bo. Cutcut
ANGELES CITY
Min Bid Price: P 900,000.00

ASB_PAM016 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 500 sqm.
Magsaysay Drive, San Carlos City
OLONGAPO CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 10,000,000 00

ATB_PAM051 2 STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,800 sqm. F.A. 545 sqm.
(w/warehouse)
TUANO SUBD, San Matias, Sto. Tomas
Min. Bid Price: P 2,500,000.00

ATB_PAM052 WAREHOUSE BLDG.
L.A. 1,200 sqm. F.A. 1,200 sqm.
PARAISO SUBD, San Matias, Sto.Tomas
Min. Bid Price: P 650,000.00

CSB_PMG011 AGRILOT W/ WARE HOUSE
L.A 4,000sqm F.A 510sqm (near Sulipan Bridge)
Dudurol Rd. Brgy. Sulipan APALIT
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,050,000.00

PANGASINAN

ASB_PSN006 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 500 sqm.
Bo. Bocag, VILLASIS
Min. Bid Price: P 500,000.00

ASB_PSN007 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 165 sqm.
Poblacion, SAN CARLOS CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 560,000.00

QUEZON PROVINCE

ANC_QP 007- FLAT AGRI LOT
L.A.11,486sqm. Brgy. Castanas, SARIAYA
(near COMMERCIAL RESORT-BEACH)
Min. Bid Price : P 2,500,000.00

ESB_QP007 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 4,447 sqm.
(near Municipal Hall of Tiaong)
National Road cor. VILLA PLANTACION
DRIVE, Brgy. Lumingon, Tiaong
Min. Bid Price: P 8,894,000.00

LDB_QPR010 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 25,000 (Near Tiaong Municipal Hall)
Brgy. Lusacan, TIAONG
Min. Bid Price: P10,000,000.00

TARLAC

ASB_TAR012 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 618 sqm. (near Town Proper)
Zone 4 Brgy. SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price: P 1,200,000.00

ASB_TAR013 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 320 sqm. (near Mc Arthur Hi-way)
Sitio Estrella, Bay SAN RAFAEL
Min. Bid Price: P 985,000.00

ASB_TAR014 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 266 sqm.(near Town Proper)
Calero Street, TIBAG
Min. Bid Price: P 500,000 00

MEGA TAGAYTAY

TPFP_BAT006 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 135 sqm.
CANYON WOODS RESIDENTIAL RESORT
Min Bid Price: P 4,950,000.00

MU_BAT001 RESIDENTIAL VACANT LOT
L.A. 735 sqm. (near Canyon Woods)
GEORGETOWN VACATION ESTATE
Talisay, Batangas City
MIN. BID PRICE: P5,880,000.00

TAGAYTAY CITY

CSB_TGY012 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A 199sqm
(near Casino Filipino & RADAR)
B1 L02 ST. JOSEPH SUBD. Mendez
Minimum Bid Price: P950,000.00

KPI_TGY 107- RESIDENTIAL FARM LOT
RODEO COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE
(Across Splendido Golf Estate)

L.A.	Min. Bid Price
1,000 sqm.	P 1,000,000.00
2,000 sqm.	P 2,600,000.00

CEBU

KPI_CBU317 - BUNGALOW HOUSE
L.A. 1,023 sqm. F.A. 216 sqm.
TAYUD LILOAN (5kms. to BEACHES)
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,800,000.00

ILOILO

KPI_ILO185 - COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 914 sqm. (near Imperial Plaza)
Corner MUELLE LONEY ST., Jaro
Minimum Bid Price: P 11,000,000.00

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

ATB_NO050 FISHPOND
L.A. 62,932 sqm.
Malusay, Caradioan, HIMLAYAN
Min. Bid Price. P 1,800,000 00

CAGAYAN DE ORO

ASB_CDO005 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 342 sqm.(near Greenhills Memorial Gardens Jem), BULUA
Min. Bid Price. P256,500 00

ZAMBOANGA

KPI_ZAM93 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 500 sqm. F.A 144.27 sqm.
STA. BARBARA(5BR & 2TB)
Minimum Bid Price. P 1,400,000.00

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Cocktales …

From page B3

March's supposed summary hearing for injunctive relief could present only one witness.

Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Cesar Santamaria also noted that Roque wanted the court to hear his group's application for injunction despite their complaint having no prayer for injunction.

Money-go-round

- AEROFLOT, the flag carrier of the Russian Federation, is returning to the Philippines initially as an off-line carrier with the appointment of Cristina Travel as general sales agent.

Cristina Travel is chaired by AIM Professor Victor Limlingan, the Ramos-era Civil Aeronautics Board member who espoused open skies, drawing the ire of Philippine Airlines.

- Pre-need company PET-Plans is closing down its San Pedro, Cubao, Pasig, Marikina and Antipolo branches to centralize plan holders services at its Legaspi Village head office.

Heard through the grapevine

PHILIPPINE National Bank has sent takeover notices on Gotesco malls in Ortigas and Monumento to satisfy developer Jose Go's long-overdue loans.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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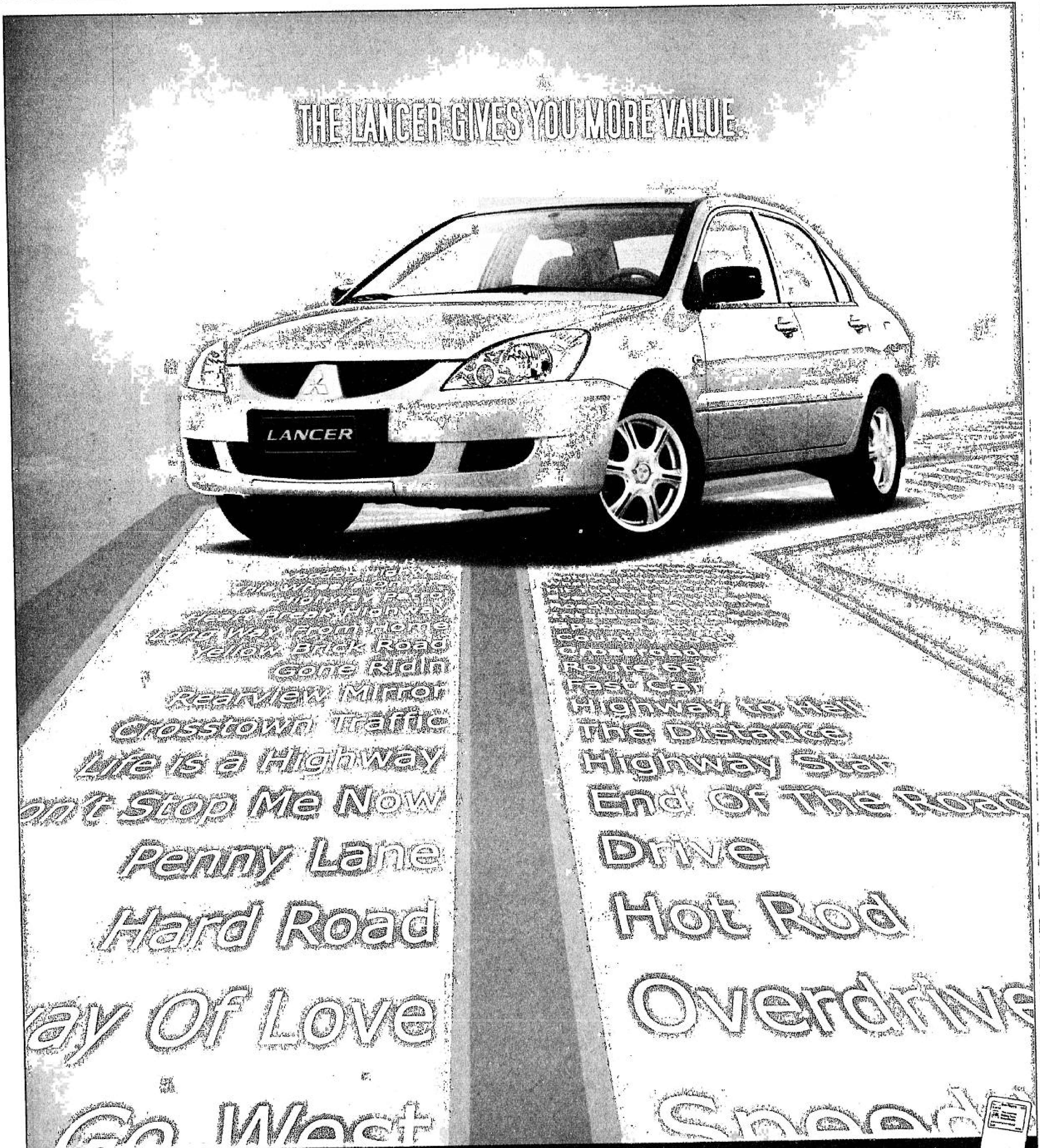

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Getting out of the governance trap

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

ONE OF THE BASIC CONCEPTS IN ECONOMIC development is the vicious cycle of poverty, or the poverty trap that keeps many nations in the grip of poverty seemingly indefinitely. Poverty or low incomes lead to low level of savings, low savings lead to low investments, low investments lead to low productivity, and low productivity leads right back to low incomes and poverty.

The way out of the predicament would be to break out of the cycle through any of the distinct links. We can try to get people to save more, for instance, especially given the glaringly low saving rate of Filipinos (well below 20 percent of GDP) compared to our neighbors (from 25-35 percent). With more savings, more investments can be funded, leading to greater productivity and ultimately higher incomes. Or we can attract foreign savings instead by drawing in large amounts of foreign investments to spur increased productivity. Still another way out would be to address productivity directly, by paying attention to firm-level productivity bottlenecks. Of course, all links in the chain can be addressed simultaneously.

Paying peanuts

On closer analysis, one finds that much of our development challenges can be traced to vicious cycles of various kinds in various settings. One of the more prominent ones is what I'd call the vicious cycle of weak governance. It is well known that among the most serious obstacles to Philippine development has been the inadequate quantity and quality of government services, often marked by lack of integrity, professionalism and dedication, and in too many cases, by graft and corruption.

Why is the quality of public governance so weak in the Philippines? It doesn't take an economist to see that this traces for the most part to low salaries in the public sector. As the saying goes, if you pay peanuts, you'll attract monkeys. (In direct contrast, Singapore, which rates highly in international measures of quality of public governance, pays its public servants rather generously.) With the relatively low official compensation package in our own public sector, we are led to an "adverse selection" problem in the way government positions are filled up. In the same way that high-risk individuals are more likely to buy insurance policies, government positions, whether elective or appointive, tend to attract more of the "high-risk" individuals as well—in this case, those who have a propensity for corruption.

Weak finances

To be fair, there are a good number who join and stay in government in spite of the sacrificial nature of its (official) compensation, out of a sense of mission and idealism. But given a choice, a competent and honest job seeker will probably opt for the private sector, where the pay tends to be more in keeping with her capabilities.

Why are public salaries in the Philippines so low? With the perennial lack of public revenues to support necessary government expenditures, salaries of Filipino public officials and civil servants cannot keep up with compensation structures in the private sector, much less with public sector salaries in our neighboring countries.

Full circle

Why have government revenues been perennially inadequate? It can't be for lack of taxes. Rates of taxation in the Philippines are no lower than those of our neighbors, but tax compliance and enforcement are. And why are tax compliance and enforcement so poor? Tax compliance will be poor where taxpayers feel they are not getting their tax money's worth in government services, and where there is a wide perception that their taxes are being misused. Meanwhile, where the salaries of revenue officials and employees are low, honest and dedicated tax officials will be hard to find. And so we are led back to lack of competence, dedication and integrity on the part of public officials and civil servants—and we turn full circle.

Our bigger tragedy is that many have come to condone these faults in government, rationalizing them on the basis of low public compensation. Similarly, tax evasion is not seen as a major sin inasmuch as taxpayers are not getting their money's worth from the government anyway. And the vicious cycle only gets further reinforced.

Breaking out

How does one break out of this vicious cycle? One might call for a dramatic upgrading of public salaries, but in the immediate term, this would amount to rewarding the misfits and the corrupt along with the truly deserving. A more basic question is where to get the money to even make this possible, especially when the payoff in terms of improved governance and increased government revenues will not come overnight. Improving public governance will necessarily be a long and painful process, which should include raising government salaries, but also requires eliminating or reassigning excess manpower in overstaffed agencies, and certainly purging the public sector of misfits and bad eggs. The current change management process put in motion in government offices by EO 366 is an attempt to accomplish this, but given government's past track record in reorganization and streamlining, skepticism is high that the exercise will lead anywhere.

The good thing about vicious cycles is that they can turn into self-reinforcing virtuous cycles once one manages to break out of the trap. The hardest part is finding where and how to break out of it.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,100,000	1,050,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,200,000	-
Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	550,000	520,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	25,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	70,000	-
Camp John Hay	190,000	170,000
Canlubang	500,000	400,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	45,000
Cebu Country Club	1,900,000	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	100,000
Club Filipino	100,000	-
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	100,000	-
Forest Hills "B"	180,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	190,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	-
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	12,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	10,500,000
Manila Polo	-	2,350,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	340,000	300,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	310,000	200,000
Mimosa (Individual)	-	180,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	500,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	200,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	200,000	140,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	350,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	-
Rockwell Club	Please Call	-
Spa & Lodge	450,000	400,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,200,000	1,100,000
Subic Bay Golf	200,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	360,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	680,000	600,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	600,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	90,000	-
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	150,000
Valley Golf	230,000	190,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,300,000	6,200,000

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Alta Vista B/Corp *	-	Pls. Call/300,000*
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Camp John Hay	-	Pls. Call
Canlubang Golf	550,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports	120,000	100,000
Club Filipino	110,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	330,000*/Pls. Call	150,000/Pls. Call*
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	120,000/180,000*	Pls. Call*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	300,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	11,500,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	2,400,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	350,000/750,000*	300,000/700,000*
Makati Sports Club	180,000	160,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	350,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	180,000	100,000
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	150,000/300,000*/420,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	230,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/400,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	-
Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	-
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,150,000	1,100,000/1,550,000*
The Palms Country Club	420,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	310,000
Tagaytay Highlands	680,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	600,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club	160,000	130,000
Valley Golf	210,000	-
Valle Verde Ind	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,350,000	6,175,000

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OR

Investor Relations Department
Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.
Gov. Manuel A. Cuenco Avenue
Kasambagan, Cebu City
Tel. No. (63-32) 231-1874
Fax No. (63-32) 231-4031
aev@aboitiz.com

Market . . .

From page B1

the overbought state of most of the listed issues."

AB Capital Securities also believes that trade "is gaining on the back of improving sentiments on the Philippine equities market."

Last week, the benchmark index posted a phenomenal rise of 8.8 percent or 200 points to close at 2,470, its highest since July 1999, fueled by prospects of better first quarter economic outlook, good bank earnings, and the Bangko Sentral's decision to hold key interest rates steady.

Inflation rate, or the year-on-year growth in consumer prices, slowed to 7.1 percent in April from 7.6 percent in March as the increase in prices of food and other items was tempered.

What also propped up investor sentiment was the expectation that the economy, as gauged by the gross domestic product, would grow by more than 5.5 percent in the first quarter of the year because of improved performance of the agriculture sector.

"The strong momentum will likely carry the market above the target 2,500 level early next week. However, having gone up already by 17.8 percent year to date, we should see the market shed off some excesses soon," AB Capital Securities wrote. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 5, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.3	6.5	64,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36.5	37	36	36	660,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	68.5	65	68.5	7,102,000
China Banking Corp.	830	880	825	880	4,590
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.45	8,530,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	73	73	72	72	71,000
International Exch. Bank	39	39.5	38.5	39.5	99,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	41	42.5	40.5	42.5	2,974,500
Philippine National Bank	34.5	35	34.5	35	36,600
Phil. Savings Bank	39.5	40	39.5	40	7,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17.25	17.25	16.75	17	167,000
Security Bank Corp.	54.5	55.5	54	54	757,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	42	42.5	41.5	41.5	187,800
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30	30	30	30	12,600
Manulife Financial Corp.	3350	3350	3350	3350	200
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1	1	228,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	200	200	200	200	3,100
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2140	2140	2140	2140	1,410
Ivantage Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.32	1.34	9,197,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	45	45	45	45	1,204,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	44.5	46	44.5	46	1,975,300
Manila Electric Co. A	13.25	13.5	13.25	13.25	79,500
Manila Electric Co. B	19	19.75	19	19.5	1,064,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.3	7.9	7.3	7.9	23,402,000
Petron Corp.	4.45	4.75	4.45	4.7	28,832,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.02	1.02	0.98	0.98	1,450,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.45	3.45	3.4	3.4	84,000
CADP Group Corp.	3	3	3	3	3,000
Cen Azucar De Tarlac	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.25	23	23	106,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	37	36	36.5	1,270,600
RFM Corp.	0.81	0.82	0.81	0.82	270,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.35	3.35	3.1	3.1	2,359,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64.5	63.5	64.5	247,800
San Miguel Corp. B	82	84	82	84	166,900
Universal Robina Corp.	23.5	23.5	23	23.25	2,954,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	50,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.37	11,670,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.82	1.84	1.76	1.8	12,599,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.3	1.3	90,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.2	3,607,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.2	1.38	1.2	1.24	410,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	14,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	250,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0975	0.105	0.095	0.1	34,000,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	190,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	21,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	405	430	405	430	988,130
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.55	0.6	0.53	0.53	390,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.2	3,865,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	10	11.5	10	11.5	1,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.026	30,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	4.15	4.35	3.9	3.9	7,503,000
APC Group Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.235	0.24	3,340,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	346,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.14	1.06	1.08	9,423,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.12	1.12	18,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	21,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.98	1.04	0.98	1.02	21,430,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.85	4.9	4.7	4.75	6,200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.6	3.75	3.6	3.65	2,757,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	0.89	0.91	0.89	0.91	260,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.66	1.76	1.66	1.7	700,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	7.8	8.1	7.6	7.7	2,858,000
Medco Holdings	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	250,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,100,000
Pacifica	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	1,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.215	0.215	4,400,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.61	460,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.165	0.155	0.155	11,400,000
SM Investments Corp.	227	240	227	239	306,640
South China Resources Inc.	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	100,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.0725	0.075	0.0725	0.0725	26,800,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.125	0.125	3,210,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14	14.75	14	14.75	31,591,800
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	80,000
Belle Corp.	1.3	1.38	1.3	1.34	35,409,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	40,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.31	0.33	0.3	0.3	3,630,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.24	2.32	2.22	2.32	3,388,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.74	1.84	1.74	1.78	290,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.02	1.1	1.02	1.1	471,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.12	1.2	1.08	1.18	645,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.225	0.23	0.22	0.22	7,150,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	70,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.66	0.68	35,900,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	2,000,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.7	0.67	0.68	80,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.54	1.68	1.54	1.66	185,059,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	100,000
Interport Res.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	20,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	45,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	450,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.6	0.72	0.59	0.59	8,270,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.6	1.64	1.58	1.64	74,244,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	14,800,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.3	510,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11	11.25	11	11.25	695,200
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	6,660,000
SM Development Corp.	1.78	1.8	1.78	1.78	2,086,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.3	8.1	8.1	12,122,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.125	3,670,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13.75	14.5	13.75	14.5	234,800
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.14	1.28	1.14	1.28	37,686,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	970	990	970	985	82,880
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.25	8,983,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2070	2130	2070	2125	200,290
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.2	0.21	8,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	40,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.027	323,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.1	541,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.25	14.25	13	14.25	9,244,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	60,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.72	1.74	277,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	19,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.59	0.63	0.59	0.61	6,120,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	670	670	670	670	1,450
iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.35	3.2	3.25	551,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.18	2.24	2.16	2.16	2,102,000
Paxys Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	867,900
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	2.9	2.95	2.75	2.8	2,405,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	2.95	2.95	2.8	2.8	1,597,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0095	0.0095	0.009	0.009	181,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.4	8.5	8.1	8.2	10,600,000
Benguet Corp. A	13	13	12.5	12.5	74,500
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.39	19,140,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.44	0.44	0.42	0.43	9,210,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	213,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	26,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	440,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.25	7,972,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.4	4.45	4.25	4.3	8,615,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	29.5	29.5	28.5	28.5	95,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.47	0.48	0.43	0.46	2,010,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.64	0.7	0.64	0.66	9,680,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.28	12,960,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	363,800,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	121,400,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.48	1.54	1.38	1.38	27,306,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.5	1.54	1.38	1.4	10,092,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	12	12.75	10.5	11.25	3,175,500
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	14.25	15	14.25	14.75	3,589,100

CURRENCIES

May 7, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.787030	1.000000	51.4600
Japan	Yen	0.006927	0.008802	0.4530
United Kingdom	Pound	1.458681	1.853400	95.3760
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.101522	0.128994	6.6380
Switzerland	Franc	0.641374	0.814930	41.9363
Canada	Dollar	0.711150	0.903587	46.4986
Singapore	Dollar	0.499100	0.634156	32.6337
Australia	Dollar	0.607745	0.772201	39.7375
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.087833	2.652801	136.5131
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.209852	0.266638	13.7212
Brunei	Dollar	0.497522	0.632151	32.5305
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000114	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.020863	0.026508	1.3641
UAE	Dirham	0.214303	0.272294	14.0122
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.270600	65.3851
ArgentinaPeso	0.259318	0.329489	16.9555	
Brazil	Real	0.381498	0.484731	24.9443
Denmark	Kroner	0.134127	0.170422	8.7699
India	Rupee	0.017563	0.022316	1.1484
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218014	0.277008	14.2548
Mexico	New Peso	0.071672	0.091066	4.6863
New Zealand	Dollar	0.506226	0.643211	33.0996
South Africa	Rand	0.129958	0.165125	8.4973
Korea	Won	0.000837	0.001064	0.0548
Sweden	Kroner	0.107373	0.136428	7.0206
Syria	Pound	0.015161	0.019264	0.9913
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024880	0.031612	1.6268

Globe gets tax perks for P5.48-B 3G venture

Six-year income tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital goods

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS HAS APproved the granting of tax perks to telecommunications giant Globe Telecom Inc. for its foray into the third-generation cellular mobile phone business with an outlay of P5.48 billion.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said Globe's project was given a pioneer status based on the huge amount involved.

Hernandez, who is also BOI managing head, said that under this new registration, Globe was classified as a new operator of infrastructure and telecommunications facilities.

The company is qualified for a six-year tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital goods and other fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

BOI data show that Globe would raise a quarter of the project's cost from stockholder equity and the rest through borrowing.

Globe's 3G project would create 368 new jobs and is expected to start commercial operations in December.

Further, the project would have a capacity of serving 536,484 subscribers a year through 1,428 nodes or base stations.

To qualify for BOI registration, Globe had to prove that its project was compliant with the International Telecommunications Union's approved family of five radio standards for the implementation of 3G.

In January, the National Telecommunications Commission assigned Globe its desired 3G frequency bands that the firm said would help hasten its delivery of 3G services to the public.

3G technology and services would allow consumers to hear and see the party they are contacting—both here and abroad—watch television shows and enjoy faster Internet connection while mobile.

Company officials have said that frequency bands that they asked for—1,945-1,955 Megahertz and 2,135-2,145 MHz—would allow the firm to deliver "superior quality 3G services."

Also, the officials added that securing the right frequencies would allow Globe to rapidly deploy its 3G service at the shortest possible time.

Other companies that are preparing their 3G systems are Smart Communications Inc., Digital Telecommunications Philippines and Connectivity Unlimited Resource Enterprise.

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Biodiesel firm eyes bigger plant, plans to go public

By Abigail L. Ho

SHORTLY AFTER INAUGURATING ITS P650-million biodiesel facility, Chemrez Inc. is already considering going public as it sets its sights on putting up an even bigger production plant.

Chemrez chief operating officer Dean Lao Jr. said the company was now studying the feasibility of setting up a P1.5-billion plant that would have a capacity of 180 million liters a year.

This plant, he said, would be thrice the size of its recently inaugurated 60-million-liters-a-year facility in Libis, Quezon City.

He said the new plant would have to be located within an economic zone to enable the company to take advantage of the perks extended to ecozone locators.

Also, it would have to be situated near a port to make transporting finished products to various export markets easier, he said.

"We need between one and two hectares of land for a 180-million-liters-a-year plant. We will look at locations with a good vantage point for shipping," he said. "Potential locations are areas near the Batangas Bay, Calatagan, Subic, Davao and Cagayan de Oro."

Unlike Chemrez's existing plant, which was funded wholly through internally generated cash, the new plant would have to be partly financed either through a straight loan or via proceeds from a possible initial public offering, he said.

The company's final decision to expand, however, was hinged on the passage of Biofuels bill, which was still pending in the Senate.

"We'll only go through with that expansion if the bill is passed. When we already have a Biofuels law, it will be easier for us to make a final decision on whether or not to expand our operations," he said.

The passage of the Biofuels bill will make mandatory the sale and use of diesel with at least a 1-percent blend of coco methyl ester (CME).

This mandate, Lao said, would give Chemrez a local market for its product. In effect, the company's existing plant would be too small to cover both domestic and international demand.

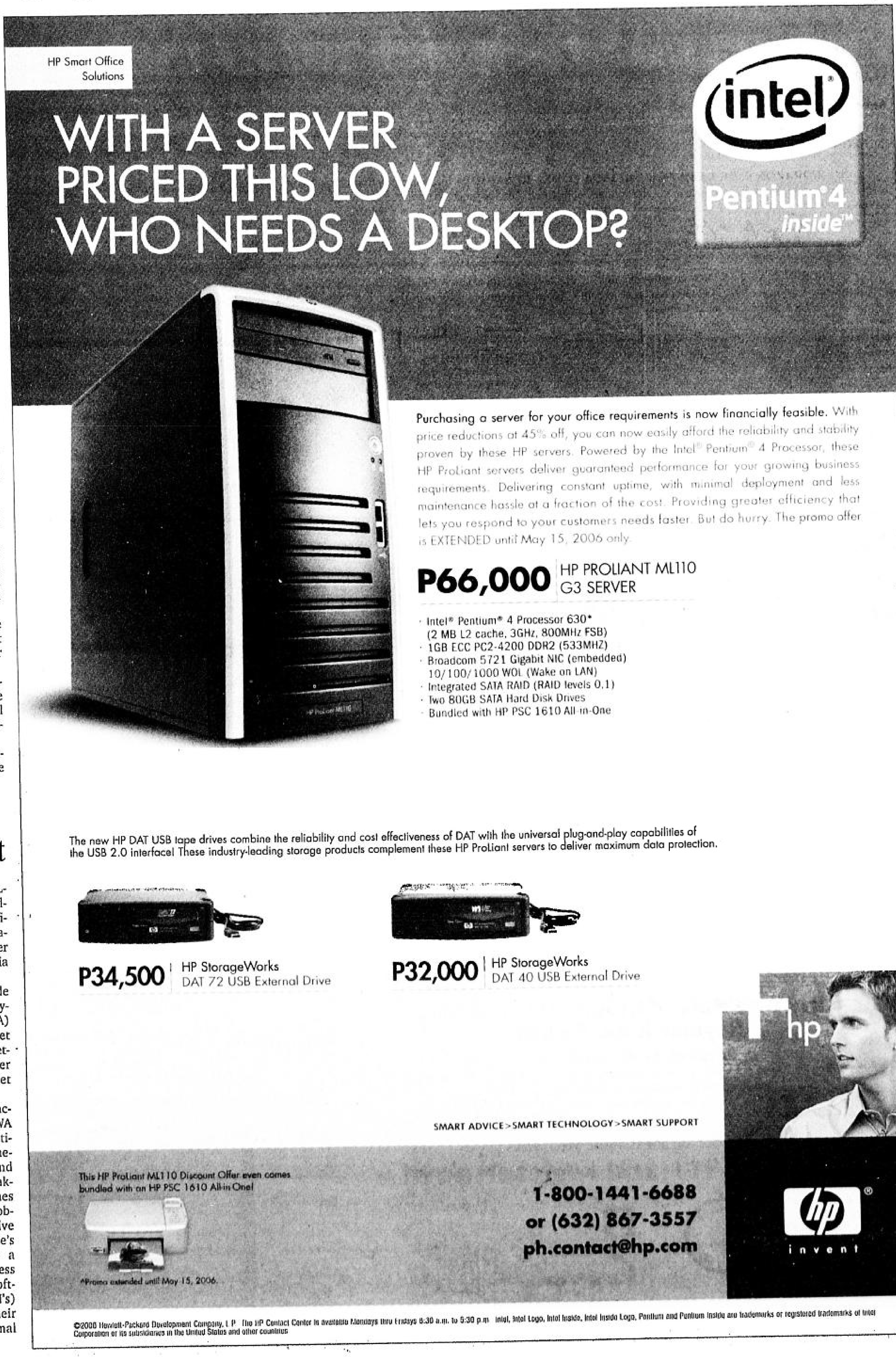
Chemrez was already looking to further expand its export market while waiting for the passage of the Biofuels bill, he said.

New technology player in state visit

LATITUDE BROADBAND INC, A NEW FILipino technology player involved in Broadband Wireless Access, will be part of the official Philippine Business Delegation accompanying President Macapagal-Arroyo in her state visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The technology developed by Latitude Broadband Inc. enables the easy deployment of Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) technologies and has been proven to meet the need for a cost-effective and speedy network deployment that can satisfy the ever growing global demand for faster Internet access.

Latitude Broadband Inc. was set up to accelerate the spread of this homegrown BWA technology outside the country. Under Latitude Broadband Inc. are Rene Dos Remedios, president, Bong Paloma, SVP and Ricky Peña, head of marketing, who are taking this crucial technology several notches higher by exporting its BWA solutions globally in markets experiencing an explosive demand for broadband services. Latitude's "Broadband-in-a-Box" model provides a complete suite of hardware (radio access technology and access controllers) and software (OSS, NMS, HD, CRM, Billing API's) modules allowing carriers to build their broadband infrastructure with minimal risks and with a quick ROI.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Justice department backs SEC move to file criminal raps vs pre-need execs

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS thrown its support behind the Securities and Exchange Commission's recommendation to file criminal charges against the officers of shuttered pre-need firm Asian Diamond Plans Inc.

On Feb. 21, state prosecutor Aristotle Reyes of the DOJ approved the filing of criminal cases against four officers of Asian Diamond: Directors Brian Wee Poh Aun and Ennily Pang, chief executive officer Norman Gonzales and chief finance officer Rommel Aniag.

The DOJ however cleared the former company president Damaso Magbual—who was named one of the five respondents in a complaint filed by the SEC. Magbual had already resigned when Asian Diamond's officers allegedly began to cover up the capital and trust fund deficiencies of the firm.

Magbual resigned on June 25, 2002. The new set of officers took over after Magbual's resignation.

The DOJ found that all reports relating to paid-up capital and trust fund deficiencies were filed after June 25, 2002.

The SEC last year approved the shutdown of Asian Diamond and the distribution of its assets to planholders.

ADPI stopped selling plans early last year. A few months later, the SEC formed a management committee to preserve the assets of the company and protect the interest of planholders.

The SEC last year found that Asian Diamond had a trust fund deficiency of P13.5 million.

A US-Singapore group subsequently bought a major stake in the pre-need firm and committed to address the firm's deficit.

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
EAST AVENUE, DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY

HIGHLIGHTS OF CONSOLIDATED OPERATIONS

For the Year Ended December 31,2005
(In Million Pesos)

REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Revenues		**59,919.5**
Contributions		47,602.1
Investment and Other Income, net		12,317.4
Expenditures		**51,908.2**
Benefit Payments		46,269.8
Retirement	20,883.8	
Death and Funeral	18,371.8	
Disability	2,963.8	
Sickness and Maternity	3,995.4	
Medical and Rehabilitation Services	55.0	
Operating Expenses		5,638.4
Net Revenue		**8,011.3**

ASSETS, LIABILITIES AND RESERVES

Assets	**199,833.1**
Investments	181,772.3
SSS Properties	2,491.5
Others	15,569.3
Liabilities	**3,425.8**
Reserves	**196,407.3**

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
QUEZON CITY) S.S.

We, **CORAZON S. DE LA PAZ** and **ERLINDA O. DEL ROSARIO** of the above-mentioned institution do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above financial highlights are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

CORAZON S. DE LA PAZ
President & CEO

ERLINDA O. DEL ROSARIO
Vice President, Controllership

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 3rd day of May 2006 at Quezon City. affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No. 24322906 issued at Makati City on 27 February 2006 and Residence Certificate No. 12750119 issued at Quezon City on 23 February 2006, respectively.

Doc. No. 219
Book No. 45
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UBP continues search for fresh acquisitions

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ABOITIZ GROUP'S UNION BANK OF the Philippines is searching the horizon for fresh acquisitions, even after it forged a buyout deal with the controlling shareholders of International Exchange Bank.

After UnionBank signed an agreement to purchase the controlling block of iBank Friday night, UBP president Victor Valdepenas said this would not be the end of its expansion mode.

"We'll continue to look for opportunities to grow through expansion," Valdepenas told the INQUIRER.

UnionBank signed a memorandum of agreement on Friday to buy at least 67 percent of iBank's voting shares at P42.50 per share, three days after the INQUIRER reported that UBP was plotting this acquisition.

UBP is hoping it will acquire 100 percent of iBank's holdings—a deal that may be worth P13.5 billion.

For this transaction, Valdepenas stressed that UBP would not ask for fresh capital from its stockholders, led by the Aboitiz group.

"We are overcapitalized," he said, explaining that the bank could still pursue other acquisitions in the future. "Our problem, in fact, is how to use our excess funds."

UnionBank is capitalized at P19 billion while its loan portfolio amounted to only P11 billion. iBank, while a much smaller bank, has a bigger loan portfolio of P28 billion.

UBP's parent conglomerate, Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., is bullish on the local banking business and has committed to expand the bank through acquisitions.

Meanwhile, banking sources told the INQUIRER that the P42.50 per share valuation, about 1.8 times iBank's book value, was agreed upon without due diligence audit. But the sources said that the price could be "adjusted," depending on the results of the formal assessment which would begin this week.

They said the due diligence audit would be finished within a month, in line with the commitment that the purchase of at least 67 percent up to 100 percent of iBank should be implemented within 30 days.

Assuming the valuation was upheld and the deal consummated, the fresh merger between the medium-sized lenders shall result in the creation of the country's ninth biggest bank with combined assets of about P168 billion and 187 branches, displacing the Yuchengcos' Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

UnionBank currently ranks 13th among the country's biggest banks, with assets of about P108 billion, while iBank ranks 17th with about P60 billion.

BSP gets a fair mark in JP Morgan report

From page B1

absorb inflows," the economist said in his report.

Central banks in Asia usually prevent excessive monetary growth by reducing domestic credit.

The JP Morgan economist explains that unrestrained money growth may lead to domestic prices pressures, resulting in "macro imbalances," and compel Asian central banks "toward less intervention."

But JP Morgan's investigation into central bank balance sheets and intervention in Asia suggested monetary authorities were still broadly able to control foreign inflows and were effectively managing reserve money growth trend.

In the Philippines, the report noted that net foreign asset accumulation has accelerated in recent months, but "offsetting sterilization has maintained reserve money growth."

But there are other analysts who think that the BSP may be having trouble sterilizing robust overseas Filipino workers' remittances, which pump in more cash into the system that could add to inflationary pressures already made worse by high oil prices.

US investment bank Goldman Sachs said in an earlier report that the BSP "has limited sterilization tools."

"The policy rate of 7.5 percent versus the overnight reverse repurchase (RRP) rate of 4.5 percent is evidence that the BSP is having trouble sterilizing the liquidity impact of its US dollar purchases," according to Goldman Sachs. "[The BSP] has to rely on the overnight reverse repos, since it cannot issue BSP bills for legal reasons."

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo denied that the BSP had limited sterilization tools, citing the reserve requirement and overnight borrowing mechanisms.

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GETTING YOU STARTED

May 16 Tuesday 9am-5pm
Bobbi Makani-Lim
Masters in Business Management-Asian Institute of Management
Square One: Preparing a Winning Business Plan
Get back to basics in starting your business and prepare a road map for your success. A comprehensive and effective business plan is the starting key to a successful start-up! Pointers on how to present your business plan are also included here.

May 30 Tuesday 9am-5pm
Claro Certeza with Ricky Mercado
Managing Partner, Strategic Franchising Concepts, Inc.
Bachelor of Laws, Ateneo de Manila College of Law
Evaluating Franchising Opportunities
You've set some funds aside. You want to start working for yourself! What do you do? Maybe, get a franchise! Tap the wide range of availabilities and select the right franchise for you. Evaluate your options.

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

May 17 Wed & 19 Fri 9am-12:30pm
Dr. Darwin Yu
Chair, Leadership and Strategy Dept., ADMU
Ph.D. in Business Administration, UP
Master in Private and Public Mgt., Yale School of Org. and Mgt.
Counting Your Eggs: Introduction to Accounting Principles
Accounting is a basic survival tool for any business person. Use accounting to keep score of your business. More importantly, understand what the numbers mean.

May 17 Wed & 19 Fri 1:30-5pm
Dr. Darwin Yu
Achieving Your Financial Targets: Managerial Accounting
Do you know if you're making money? You have good sales but no cash in the bank! Equip yourself with the analytical tools to relate operational decisions to the bottom line.

May 18 Thursday 9am-5pm
Amor Santiago
Twenty plus years of senior HR practice.
Master in Business Administration, DLSU
MA cand. Asian Studies, UP
Personal Touch: Effective Human Resource Management for SMEs
Grow the business and minimize the fuss. Put together a healthy and productive organization. Improve your ability to manage your human resource effectively and feel its effect on the bottomline!

May 24 Wed & 26 9am-12:30pm
Chito Tanchoco
Chair, Quantitative Methods and Information Technology Department, ADMU
Master of Science in Operations Research, Northwestern University
Streamline Your Operations: Managing Your Inputs
Reduce costs and maximize profits by knowing and understanding materials management and inventory, operations design and economic order quantity in your operations!

May 24 Wed & 26 1:30-5pm
Chito Tanchoco
Managing Your Logistics
Don't get wrong-footed by increasingly complex requirements in your business. Do you have issues with transportation and handling of finished goods? Understand scheduling, routing selection and unit load handling!

May 29 Monday 9am-5pm
Ma. Nanette A. Biason
Senior Manager – Corporate Banking Special Lending Group, BPI
Cutting a Deal: Financing and Funding Sources for Your Business
Ready and set but can't go? Use financial institutions to raise capital for your growing company. Orders up to here but can't buy the materials? What do you do? Talk to your friendly and helpful banker!

FAMILY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

May 31 Wednesday 9am-5pm
Badjie Guerrero & CCA Team
General Manager – The Cravings Group
Master in Business Administration, UP
Master in Entrepreneurship, AIM
Certificate in Food and Beverage Management, Cornell University
Restaurant Management
So you want to go into the food business? Everybody says it's the only business worth going into in these difficult times. Learn the basics of the trade. Assess and understand the market situation.

June 1 Thursday 9am-5pm
Ricky Mercado & Team
Professorial Lecturer, Leadership and Strategy Dept. ADMU
Diploma in Family Therapy and Dynamics, Ateneo
Master in Business Administration, Ateneo Graduate School of Business
Strategic Planning and Professionalizing the Business
As businesses grow in size and complexity, the family needs to sort out the relationship between the family tree and the organizational chart! Learn about strategies for professionalizing family businesses.

June 2 Friday 9am-5pm
Ricky Mercado & Team
Crafting Your Family Constitution
This encapsulates the founder's beliefs and ideals. Carve it in stone! This is the road map that provides the guidance for the subsequent generations to follow!

Payments can be made by cash or check.

Crew Gold infusing $20M in Apex for mining asset rehab

Raising Masara mine capacity in next 2 years

By Christine A. Gaylican

NORWEGIAN MINING FIRM CREW GOLD Corp. is infusing $20 million into Philippine firm Apex Mining Co. for the rehabilitation of its gold mining property in Compostela Valley in Mindanao.

This was disclosed by Crew Gold Corp. CEO Jan Vestrum in a recent presentation to shareholders, pointing out that this coincided with Crew's recent acquisition of more than 70 percent equity in Apex. This information is also posted on the company's website.

Vestrum said the investment would be spent for the acquisition of transport, processing and other support facilities that would enable the project's production capacity.

"By the end of this year, the Masara mine will hopefully be fully rehabilitated. The current target is to produce between 50,000 and 80,000 ounces of gold this year and to increase this to 150,000 ounces next year," he said.

With the upgrading of its facilities, Abacus Securities said, Apex may produce 200,000 ounces of gold a year at Masara starting in 2008.

According to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, with as much as 2.5 million ounces of gold reserves, the mine life could reach 12 years and can be extended by at least five years if nearby copper and gold porphyry deposits can be confirmed and exploited.

"Apex, should, therefore have the second largest domestic mining operation among locally listed firms in 2007 (just behind Philex Mining Corp. in terms of metal value sold)," Abacus Securities said in its report.

Aside from its interests in Apex, Crew has a nickel property to develop in Mindoro which was estimated to yield some 60,000 tons of nickel.

The Masara mines will be complemented by the rehabilitation of the Toledo/Carmen mines of Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp., the Teresa Gold Project of Lepanto Consolidated, the Padcal mine of Philex Mining Corp., the Adlay nickel project of BHP/QN1 in Surigao gold district.

"There is still a lot of potential to develop new mines, noting that about nine million hectares or 30 percent of the archipelago has been identified to be of high potential for mineral deposits," said Mines and Geosciences Bureau Assistant Director Edwin G. Domingo.

ONE-WAY fare to any domestic destination at P398

Cebu Pacific offers off-peak fare discounts

By Daxim L. Lucas

BUDGET AIRLINE CEBU PACIFIC AIR INC. IS maintaining its strategy of selling seats to domestic destinations below cost, offering another round of discounts on off-peak travel starting late last week.

In a statement, Cebu Pacific said that clients could fly to several domestic destinations from June 14 to July 31 for as low as P398 one way, exclusive of fees, taxes and surcharges.

The promo follows the airline's P10 and P1 fare promo that caused a marketing stir and was eventually mimicked by Philippine Airlines' sister company Air Philippines.

The selling period for this promo began last May 5 and will run until tomorrow, May 9.

This promotional sale is on top of Cebu Pacific's "Go" fares, which offer permanent low fares for early bookings all year round.

"We are nearing the end of summer when domestic tourism is robust, but we would like to encourage people to continue traveling even during the off-peak period because this is when we and the whole tourism industry need people to travel more," Cebu Pacific general manager Bong Mojica said in a statement. "Events like our summer seat sale will stimulate and grow the market even further."

The summer seat sale fares start at P398 for Cebu to Iloilo; P498 for Manila to Kalibo and Roxas; P598 for Manila to Bacolod, Cebu, Iloilo, Puerto Princesa and Tacloban, Cebu to Davao, Zamboanga, and Davao to Zamboanga; and P798 for Manila to Butuan, Cotabato, Cagayan de Oro, Dumaguete, Davao, Tagbilaran, Zamboanga and from Davao to Iloilo (via Cebu) for a one-way trip.

"Just like our previous seat sales, these fares are for immediate payment upon booking," Mojica said. "The fastest way to buy tickets for this promo is via our website."

The company did not disclose how many seats would be made available for this promo.

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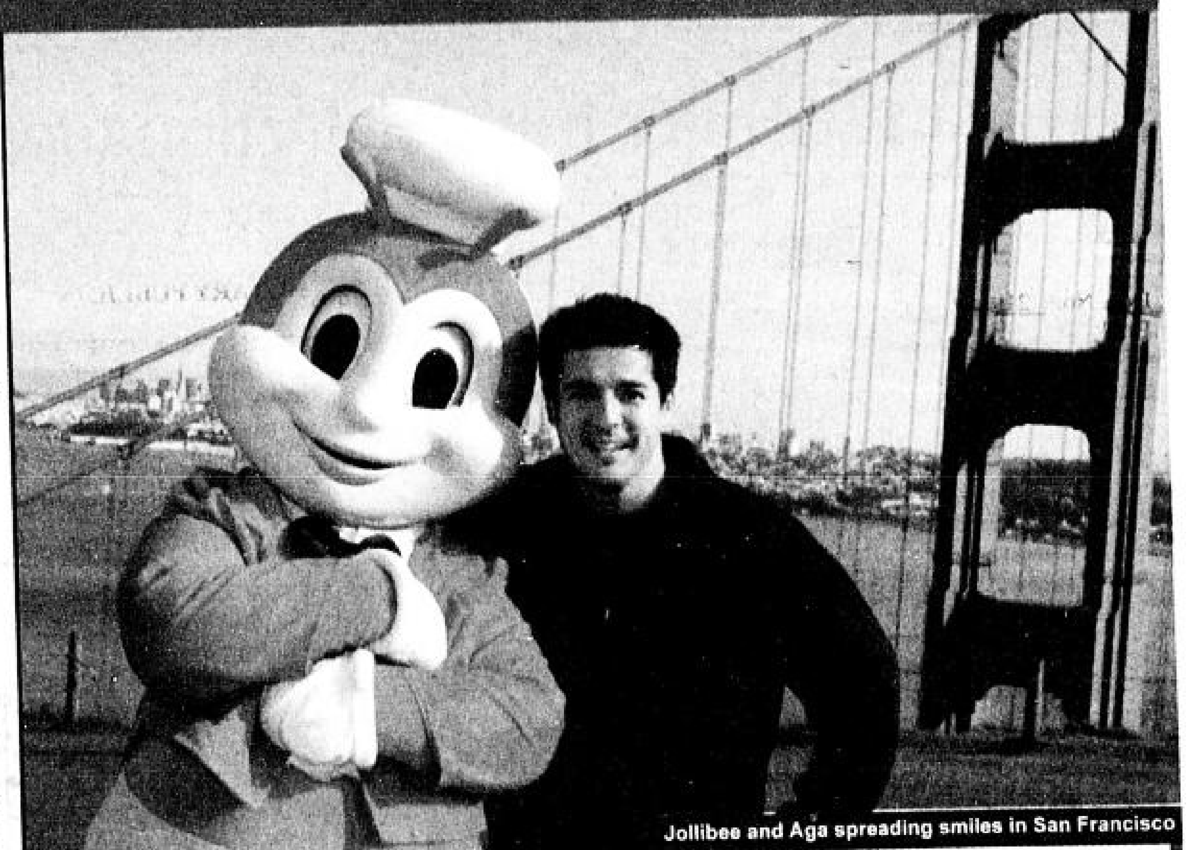
Jollibee Takes Langhap-Sarap to the U.S.

As Jollibee launches its all-time favorites and opens its 10th store in the US, the company carries on its commitment to global expansion – giving Filipinos abroad a taste of home.

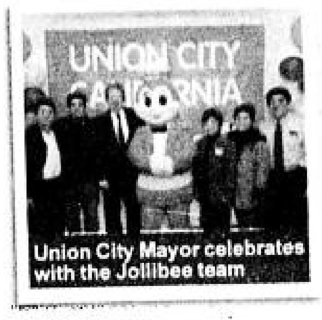
Jollibee, the Philippines' favorite fast food chain, made big waves when it introduced its much-loved meals to the US market: the Yumburger, Burger Steak, and the crispylicious, juicylicious Chickenjoy in classic Jollibee recipe.

Mr. Tommy King, VP for Jollibee US Operations, and Ms. Inez Reyes, Jollibee VP for Marketing, together with the Jollibee's top celebrity endorser, Aga Muhlach, led the successful tour across California.

At every store, US-based Filipinos eagerly welcomed the Jollibee team and Aga as they treated our kababayans to an hour of music, dance numbers, games, picture taking and of course, great-tasting Jollibee food.



Jollibee and Aga spreading smiles in San Francisco



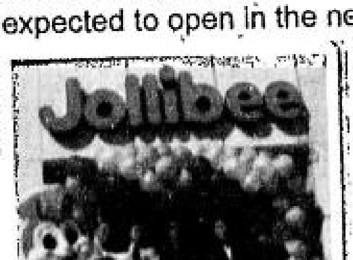
Union City Mayor celebrates with the Jollibee team

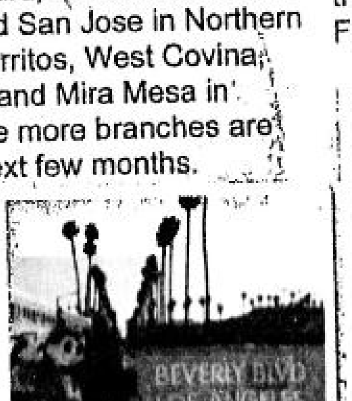
Aga greets fans at Eagle Rock, California

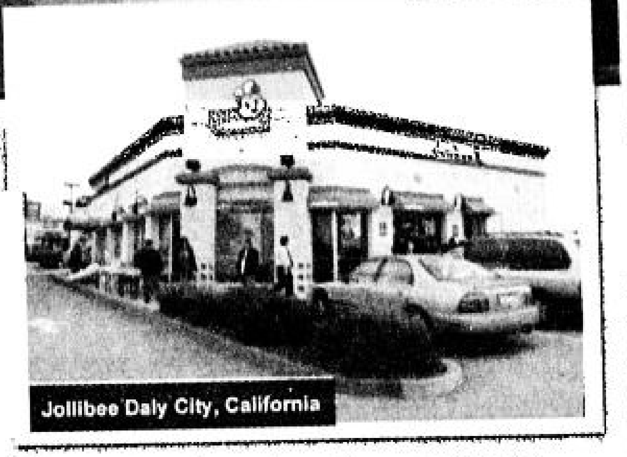
Bee at Beverly Boulevard

Coinciding with the launch of the now world-class favorites was the opening of Jollibee's 10th store in the US: Jollibee Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles. This new landmark underlines the company's aggressive expansion in the United States.

Aside from Beverly Boulevard, Jollibee has stores in Daly City, Union City and San Jose in Northern California; and Carson, Cerritos, West Covina, Eagle Rock, National City and Mira Mesa in Southern California. Three more branches are expected to open in the next few months.





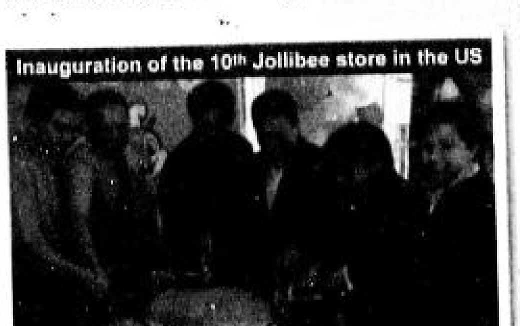


Jollibee Daly City, California

Home is where langhap-sarap is

"We want every Jollibee store to be a haven for the Filipino," said Mr. King. "That's why we've made sure that our fellow Pinoys can enjoy the same langhap-sarap products and experience the same alagang Pinoy service that is the trademark of world-class Jollibee."

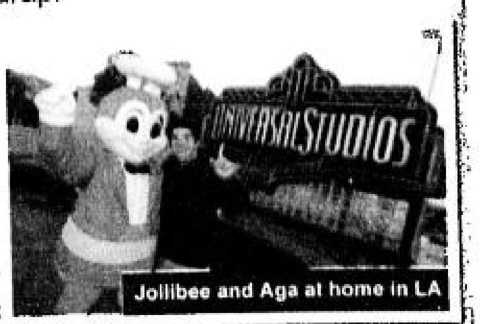
This was the message conveyed by the Jollibee executives when they paid a courtesy call to Philippine Consul Generals Rowena Mendoza Sanchez and Willie Gaa during their visit to the Philippine Consulates in San Francisco and Los Angeles.



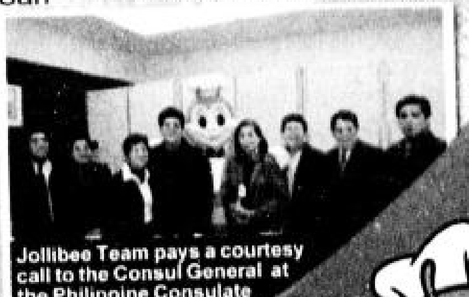
Inauguration of the 10th Jollibee store in the US

Jollibee Daly City store management team

Jollibee is now a world-class brand with over 500 stores in 7 countries, including the Philippines, US, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Saipan, Guam and Brunei. Perhaps in the near future, Filipinos everywhere will have a Jollibee store nearby, and the whole world will get a taste of true langhap-sarap.



Jollibee and Aga at home in LA



Jollibee Team pays a courtesy call to the Consul General at the Philippine Consulate

Jollibee

MONETARY BOARD MEMBERS UNDERGO GOOD GOVERNANCE SESSIONS
Adherence to international best practices on corporate governance continues to take root within the Philippine banking sector. BSP Governor and Monetary Board Chair Amando Tetangco Jr. (fourth from left) led other members of the Monetary Board in an inter-action session on governance designed and facilitated by Dr. Jesus Estanislao, chair of the Institute of Corporate Directors (fifth from left). With them are from left: MB members Raul Boncan Jr., Alfredo Antonio, Juanita Amatong, Nelly Villafuerte, Vicente Valdepeñas Jr. and BSP general counsel Juan de Zuñiga Jr.

Local poultry firm inks deal with halal certifying agency

A step to penetrate multi-billion-dolllar market

By Ronnel W. Domingo

EXPORTERS AIMING AT A SLICE of the multi-billion-dollar Islamic food market made a headway last week as a poultry producer and distributor inked a pact with an internationally recognized halal-certifying body.

Abdul Rahman RT Linzag, president of the Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines, said in an interview that his group signed a memorandum of agreement with Bounty Agro Ventures Inc. and its contractor 3J Foods Corp. to ensure that their chicken products underwent halal process.

Linzag said Bountry Agro, which owns the Bounty Fresh brand, planned to have its entire production halal-certified whether or not these were intended for Muslim markets.

Halal is an Arabic word that can be translated as "permissible" and, in relation to consumables, it refers to products that Muslims are allowed to use, eat and drink in the observance of Islam.

"Bounty Fresh has aggressive plans about tapping the export market and its management believes that having halal products would give them an edge," Linzag said.

Linzag added that even certain segments of non-Muslim markets in Japan and Europe wanted halal foods because, to these consumers, halal means high quality.

"Some health experts would even recommend patients with nutrition problems to go for halal foods," he said.

The IDCP chief said this would be the first time that locally produced chicken products would be certified by a group recognized by the Jakarta-based World Halal Council.

Bounty Agro, whose contractors like 3J Foods process between 20,000 and 30,000 birds daily, aims at gaining market footholds in Japan, United Arab Emirates and Malaysia.

Linzag said the company was taking steps to have the facilities of its other contractors in the Bicol region and in Mindanao become halal compliant.

"Buyers in Muslim countries and communities are very strict (about halal meat products)," Linzag explained. "They require three documents for the products—one each covering the state of the animals before and after they are killed and a third for the halal certification itself."

The local halal food industry has been developing steadily as the government and the private sector took efforts to tap the $150-billion-a-year global halal food market.

SSS: Fighting corruption from within

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN the government is extremely difficult. It is usually a case of an outsider going up against a powerful insider.

What is needed is for an insider to file a case against a fellow insider. Certainly, there are a lot of people in the government who are honest. But, understandably, they would rather turn their eyes away from and keep mum about the corruption around them.

Except at the Social Security System. In 2001, with the help of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, eight lady executives (vice presidents May Catherine Ciriaco, Aurora Ortega, Marissu Bugante, Erlinda del Rosario, and assistant vice presidents Antonette Fernandez, Luz Generoso, Maribel Ortiz, and Virginia Gallarde) charged 14 of the highest officials and executives of the SSS (whose names will never soil this column) for grave misconduct, and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service.

This was the first, and still the only, case where government executives sued fellow executives for graft and corruption. If it is up to me, I will put these ladies up for canonization.

The case involved the purchase of 72 percent of the outstanding shares of Philippine Commercial and Industrial Bank worth P32 billion. The buyer's group included the SSS, the GSIS and Equitable Bank. The merged bank is now known as Equitable PCI Bank.

The SSS coughed up P7.5 billion as its part in the deal. The ladies charged the accused of approving the purchase without exercising due diligence as required under the SSS law resulting in huge losses.

I remember this controversy quite well. The Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP) had just been registered at the Securities and Exchange Commission in June 1999. The SSS chair then was kind enough to talk to the PARP board. We asked him if a due diligence was conducted by the SSS. He shocked us when he said it was not necessary.

The SSS has lost billions in the deal. After the merger, the share was valued at P96 per. This value kept dropping at the exchange. At the lowest point, the share was trading at less than P30 per share. Today, seven years later, the share price is up to about P75 per share.

In 2002, the Office of the Ombudsman imposed the penalty of dismissal from the service, with forfeiture of retirement benefits and perpetual disqualification for reemployment in the government service on four of the accused. Two of the accused were suspended from office for six months without pay. Five of the accused were fined the equivalent of six months per diem per meeting. Three were absolved.

Last month, the 14th division of the Court of Appeals stunned the ladies by reversing the decision of the Office of the Ombudsman. But the ladies were not about to give up. At their own expense, they hired a high-powered law firm to petition the Supreme Court for review on *certiorari*.

From the way the Supreme Court has been deciding cases these past few weeks, there is every r eason to hope that the ladies will, in the end, prevail.

I hope what the ladies have done will encourage other government employees to fight corruption from within. It is not enough to fight corruption from without.

TIM, partner offer fraud detection tool for banks

TOTAL INFORMATION MANAGEment (TIM) Corp., a provider of enterprise technology services in the Philippines, has teamed up with Singapore-based SDG Software Technologies to offer a fraud detection solution that will allow financial institutions to meet the requirements of the Anti-Money Laundering Law.

"The issuance by the Monetary Board of Circular Letter No. 495 mandating all universal and commercial banks to implement an electronic monitoring system to detect and monitor money-laundering transactions will likely lead banks to shift to a more efficient electronic system," said Jose Mari Antunez, president and CEO of TIM. "This prompted us to seek best-of-breed solution for the local market, thus this partnership with SDG," he added.

In a statement, TIM quoted SDG managing director Suheim Sheikh as saying, "SDG recognizes TIM's strengths, especially in the banking sector and we are delighted to join hands with TIM who has working relationship with leading technology and solutions providers. The need of the hour is a comprehensive yet cost-effective compliance tool as banks and other financial institutions prepare to comply with increasingly more stringent antimoney laundering legislation across the globe."

SDG's offering includes BankAlert, a sophisticated, feature-rich solution that caters to AML regulatory requirements, enabling financial institutions to concentrate on growing their business while making sure that they comply with regulatory requirements.

MOVEMENTS

Citibank's new business manager

JONES

CITIBANK PHILIPPINES GLOBAL Consumer Bank has named Mark Jones its new country business manager.

Jones was previously with Citibank in Australia where he gained extensive experience in consumer banking. The key positions he has held include CFO, director of mortgages and most recently, retail bank director.

As country business manager, Jones will be responsible for Citibank's consumer banking operations in the country which cover credit cards, retail banking and consumer loans, offered via affiliate Citi-Financial Corp.

Jones will also serve concurrently in the board of Citibank Savings, a recent acquisition that increases Citigroup's exposure in the country with 36 additional branches nationwide.

UPS names new head for RP unit

SARKARI

UPS Philippines announced the appointment of Pirojshaw Sarkari as its managing director.

Sarkari will oversee UPS' joint venture operations in Parañaque and the UPS Intra-Asia hub in Clark, Pampanga.

"I'm really excited about this move to the Philippines. The Philippine operation is vital to UPS in the Asia Pacific region because of the intra-Asia hub. I look forward to working with the team to continue building on UPS' success in this region and help our customers navigate the global market with our innovative supply chain solutions," Sarkari said.

Sarkari is an Indian national and was with UPS India prior to his move to the Philippines. In India, Sarkari spearheaded the successful launch of the first UPS retail chain known as The UPS Store, in Mumbai. Up until 2005, Sarkari was the country manager for The UPS Store in India.

He holds a degree in commerce from Mumbai University and is a chartered accountant from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

Importation of 300,000MT of corn pushed

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE COUNTRY WILL IMPORT more than 300,000 metric tons of corn to fill up local production shortfall estimated at 1.3 million metric tons, according to an official from the feed milling industry.

The requirement of feed millers cannot be met by domestically-produced corn, said Ricardo M. Pinca, vice president of the Philippine Association of Feed Millers Inc. (Pafmi).

As of April this year, corn imports already exceeded minimum access volume (MAV) of 216,000 metric tons, hitting 279,000 metric tons. MAV refers to the minimum volume of a commodity that a member-country of the World Trade Organization is allowed to import at a preferential or lower tariff.

"The most prudent thing to do is to bring in not less than 300,000 metric tons of imported corn while world market prices are stable," Pinca said, adding that "if we do not bring in corn, the prices of chicken and other poultry products, pork and other hog products will continue to rise beyond the purchasing capacity of consumers."

He said the country's P103-billion feed milling industry—consisting of commercial millers and integrators such as San Miguel Corp., Cargill Philippines, Swift Foods, General Milling Corp., Universal Milling Corp. and Tyson Agro-Ventures—were all expanding their production to keep pace with growing demand.

"The industry has to cope with the growing demand for both food corn and corn for animal feeds. The Philippine population is growing at an annual rate of 3 percent, and demand for poultry and hogs is also increasing at almost the same level," he said.

Pinca pointed out that the feed milling industry needed about 4.3 million MT of yellow corn, but based on government projections, local corn producers could only supply 3.5 million MT.

Last year, feed millers produced 8.6 million MT of feeds. Corn-based feeds accounts for half of the total feed production, corn-substitutes such feed wheat and soybean meal account for the other half.

Cheaper service critical to 3G's success, says Nokia exec

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE SUCCESS OF THE RECENTLY launched third-generation (3G) wireless services in the market will depend on both the cost of new handsets and the cost of the service, according to the local head of the world's largest mobile phone maker.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Nokia country manager Parikshit Bhasin said the pricing factor would ultimately determine how fast 3G services would reach a critical mass in the Philippines.

"The cost of usage (for 3G services) is also a driver," he said, adding that wireless networks like Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc. were on the right track by trying to push down their service fees.

"Making the service affordable to the user is just as important as having affordable handsets."

The new 3G technology introduced recently by Smart and Globe allows users to use their mobile phones to make video conference calls, view streaming video from television broadcasts, and browse the Internet at speeds significantly faster than existing services. Bhasin's comments come on the heels of the statement made by Globe Telecom president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza that the local market must see handset prices drop to $100 per unit or less before 3G could truly catch on the way existing second-generation services have.

"Handsets are a one-time expense," he said, explaining that even cheap handsets will not boost the new technology's prospects if consumers cannot afford the cost of regular use. "So (3G) services must also be fairly priced."

At present, the cheapest 3G phones sell for the equivalent of $225 per unit, while the most advanced models sell for as much as $500 each, Bhasin said.

"These prices will come down eventually, but it will take time," he said. "It's not a question of 'if,' but a question of 'when.'"

The Nokia chief declined to predict how fast the new service would catch on, given the aggressive marketing efforts of the country's largest mobile phone network, although he pointed out that the existing 2G system took about five years to reach critical mass.

"Anytime you start something new, it will always be expensive until you reach a certain volume," he said.

At present, Nokia has the widest array of phone models compatible with the 3G service. "We offer the most extensive product line with five phones," he said.

"We are about to launch another [model] soon," he added, referring to the new N80 model. He said that demand for late-model phones in the country is high as evidenced by the fact that all of the new N91 units were sold out soon after it was launched recently.

"There has been a significant shift in the market," Bhasin added.

Mommy, I love you!

GLOBE and Smart try to make their service fees as low as possible to win the market.

PHOTOS FROM GLOBE AND SMART PRINT ADS

10 MNCs setting up regional offices in RP

By Ronnel W. Domingo

AT LEAST 10 MULTINATIONAL FIRMS are putting up regional bases in the country worth some $1.85 million or some P94 million following the trade department's issuance of permits in the past eight months.

According to the Department of Trade and Industry, one of the 10 companies, Hilo Fish Co. Inc., is establishing an area headquarters in the country for the first time.

The Hawaii-based Hilo Fish, engaged in importation, production and wholesale distribution of fresh and frozen sea food, earmarked $50,000 to put up its office here.

The other nine companies are laying out $200,000 each to set up their facilities in the country.

Three firms—including Carrier International Corp., Oberthur Card Systems SA and Valeant Pharmaceuticals International—were converting their existing area HQ into regional operating headquarters.

Deleware-based Carrier is engaged in the provision of technical representation of its air-conditioners and coolers outside of the United States.

Oberthur of France is engaged in the design, development, production and marketing of smart cards while Valeant, also of Deleware, manufactures chemicals and botanical products

The remaining six firms that were putting up ROHQs include Jollibee Worldwide Pte. Ltd., Amkor Worldwide Service LLC, AB Food & Beverages Taiwan Inc., Manulife Data Services Inc., Branders.com Inc. and Blue Frog Mobile Inc.

Incorporated in Singapore, Jollibee Worldwide is an investment and holding company involved in international trade just like Amkor Worldwide—another Deleware-based firm.

Taipei-based AB F&B is into retail and wholesale of food and grocery and non-alcoholic beverages while Branders.com—also of Deleware—is into the distribution of promotional items.

Blue Frog Mobile of Washington is an information and communication technology-enabled service firm that is focused on mobile entertainment and communication services.

Manulife Data of Barbados caters to the Manulife group of companies for its data processing needs.

According to the DTI, companies that would locate their RHQs in the country may enjoy exemption from income tax and value-added tax; zero-rated VAT on sale or lease of goods and property while firms with ROHQs may enjoy reduced tax liabilities at 10-percent tax on income from qualifying services; 10-percent VAT; 15-percent branch profit remittance tax.

Both kinds of offices would enjoy exemption from all local taxes, fees and charges except real property tax; and tax and duty-free importation of equipment and materials for training.

More perks for insurance, pre-need sectors sought

Study shows banks getting more incentives

By Michelle V. Remo

A US-FUNDED THINK TANK HAS urged the Philippine government to provide additional fiscal incentives to the country's insurance and pre-need sectors to perk up the anemic industry.

A study commissioned by Emerge, or the Economic Modernization through Efficient Reforms and Governance, stated government support to the financial sector in the Philippines pales in comparison to the ones seen in neighboring Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Emerge is an arm of the US Agency for International Aid (USAID) that looks into needed reforms in a country.

It noted the perceived inequity in the granting of incentives to the domestic financial sector, saying banks are given more privileges than other financial institutions like insurance and pre-need.

Emerge is the former American lobby group Agile (Accelerated Growth, Investments and Liberalization with Equity) which provides technical and financial assistance to poor and developing countries like the Philippines.

Emerge tapped the Zambrano and Gruba Law Offices to do the study. During the law office's presentation of the study, it noted that while banks are exempted from paying the 20 percent final withholding tax on interest income and time deposits of at least five years, such exemption is not available to other financial institutions.

The study also noted that while retirement plans administered by banks are exempted from the income tax, those administered by life insurance and pre-need companies are imposed the tax.

The Emerge-commissioned study also said the financial sector in the Philippines could be considered heavily taxed if compared with its neighbors. It said the financial sector is imposed several taxes, including the final withholding tax, the gross receipt tax (GRT) and the documentary stamp tax (DST).

The insurance sector has called for tax relief, such as removal of the DST, saying the taxes have made insurance products expensive for Filipino income earners. The pre-need sector, on the other hand, has been battered by financial problems by some of its members, like Pacific Plans and College Assurance Plan.

Financial institutions in Hong Kong and Singapore do not pay the DST and the GRT, the study noted. In Thailand, its equivalent of the final withholding tax only has a rate of either 15 and 1 percent, compared with the 20 and 7.5 percent in the Philippines.

Debt instruments like government securities are not imposed the DST in Hong Kong and Singapore, while these are charged a 0.5-percent DST in the Philippines.

A government official said the Department of Finance has been asked by Emerge to consider supporting proposals to provide additional government support to the financial sector through the granting of incentives that are available in Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong.

The source, however, said the government could not yet afford to grant generous fiscal incentives to the financial sector, and to other sectors, given that it is still confronted with a huge budget deficit.

The official noted that the country should not be compared to Hong Kong and Singapore, whose populations are much less than that of the Philippines.

"Hong Kong and Singapore are much smaller and have much less population. The Philippines, on the other hand, needs the revenues to accommodate the estimated 85 million population, for whom the government has to provide health, education and social services," the official said.

Pure Foods posted 80% jump in income to P1B last year

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL PURE FOODS INC. reported an 80-percent increase in its net income to P1 billion in 2005 from P564.7 million in 2004.

In a report to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), it said the income jump was driven by higher volumes of its poultry, feeds and flour operations.

San Miguel Pure Food's poultry business posted a record high as revenues grew 7 percent due to good supply-demand conditions, improved operational efficiencies, and good selling prices.

Amidst the stiff competition and the contraction in the hog industry brought about by high cost of feeds, limited piglet supply and threat of various animal diseases, revenue of the feeds business grew 11 percent to P13.9 billion.

The flour business sustained its profitable performance generating a modest volume growth of 2 percent in spite of a relatively flat industry growth.

The Purefoods-Hormel Co. Inc. registered another banner year in terms of volume after posting double-digit sales volume and revenue growths of 14 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

Magnolia Inc. posted P4.2 billion in revenues, 15 percent higher than in 2004 partly due to new products such as milk and ice cream.

Higher raw material costs, constraints in upward pricing and increase in fixed costs due to expansion-related expenses prevented the business from achieving its profitability target however.

The coffee joint venture business under San Miguel Super Coffeemix Co. Inc., whose San Mig Coffee products were launched in the market barely a year ago, has already captured a commendable market share.

Operating profits of Great Food Solutions, the food service division of the company and which also operates the Smokey's franchise, grew by more than four times versus the past year due to the transfer of the commissary operations of Monterey sometime in February. Number of outlets served increased to 4,108 in 2005 from 3,961 in 2004.

Smokey's outlets opened last year hit 46, bringing the total number to 103 by the end of 2005.

The company's interest in Monterey, whose volume and revenue increased by 3 percent and 6 percent, respectively, contributed P13.8 million to the company's income for 2005.

Philippine Nutrition Technologies Inc., its joint venture operation with Taiwan-based Great Wall Group for the manufacture of feed supplements and feed rations for young animals, ceased commercial operations starting Oct. 1 after its board approved to dissolve the company.

Of the total net income, income from the parent firm was P677.2 million last year, up 96 percent from P346 million, in 2004.

Income from minority interests also climbed to P339.8 million from P218.5 million in 2004.

San Miguel Pure Foods said it registered another banner performance in 2005 as consolidated revenues grew to P50.4 billion from P45.3 billion, a commendable 11 percent growth, or more than a P5 billion increase from its 2004 level.

Promoting tourism by preserving nature

By Raquel P. Gomez

CORPORATE CITIZEN

MALAYSIAN KHOO BOO BOON, CHIEF EXecutive officer of the Legend International Resorts Ltd. in Subic, Olongapo, came to the Philippines in 2002 and was captivated by the sun, sea and mountains in the former US naval base.

Upon discovering that Subic was the perfect place for nature adventure activities and outdoor sports, Boon immediately embarked on a quest to promote awareness and preservation of Subic's natural wonders by holding sports and adventure competitions similar to those in shows like "Amazing Race" and "Survivor."

For Boon, the efforts of the Legend group of hotels in Subic during the past four years is pioneering because the hospitality industry in the Philippines rarely focuses on nature preservation to encourage tourism.

"I think the development in tourism and promoting tourist destinations should co-exist with preserving the country's pristine beaches and forest covers," says Boon. "We need to make sure that tourism development shouldn't be disastrous to the environment, or else we will lose our cultural endowments and natural biodiversity. If we destroy what we have, then we will no longer be spoken of in terms of tourist destination because there won't be anything to see."

Recently, Legend International Hotels held the 4th Subic Bay Legendary Wilderness Adventure that coincided with Earth Day celebrations in Subic. The event brought together adventure seekers, travel enthusiasts and the sports-minded people all over the country to compete against each other in several adrenalin-packed activities involving mountain biking, kayaking, mountain survival skills, tree rappelling and mountain trekking. The event was also a fund-raising campaign and proceeds went to the Philippine National Red Cross.

Boon says the hotel has been doing environmental and cause-oriented activities four times a year. For the past four years, since Boon took over Legend International Hotels, the hotel, through these activities, was able to raise funds for kids' education, eye surgeries for the elders, victims of spouse abuse, and indigenous communities.

"There's this philosophy that says that you can only do good when you do well. But some of these deserving and needy communities cannot afford to wait for a business to do well to uplift their condition. I think that this is something that we should constantly support. We should always try to help the less fortunate," he says.

BOON

An active sportsman himself, Boon loves to bike, hike and sail. He himself underwent the activities for the Legendary Subic Adventure first before presenting these to the participants. Like the others involved in promoting tourism in Subic, Boon saw Subic's big potential in attracting and capturing tourists who like the sports he loves to do, aside from sightseeing of course.

"Subic has very good sites for sport activities. This is the only place where you can find activities within 10 minutes. Within 10 minutes, you could either be in the beach or you could be enjoying a game of golf, or hiking the hills. You can do anything here from para sailing to bungee jumping, game fishing, biking to forest trekking."

As to the effect of the hotel's nature awareness promotion to tourism in Subic, Boon says he couldn't yet quantify its impact, except that Subic is becoming more known as the center for adventure and sports.

"In the hospitality business, I think that we're the only one who pushed forward this agenda. But we don't look at the instrumental value of what we do. Our premise is really to encourage the tourists from other countries to come here and really appreciate the cultural richness as well as the physical beauty of this country."

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of **ABOITIZ EQUITY VENTURES, INC.**, will be held on 15 May 2006 at 4:00 p.m. at the Grand Ballroom of Cebu City Marriott Hotel, Cebu Business Park, Cebu City.

The Agenda of the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Notice of Meeting
3. Determination of Quorum
4. Reading and Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Stockholders' Meeting of 16 May 2005
5. Presentation of the President's Report
6. Approval of Annual Report and Financial Statements
7. Ratification of the Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors, Corporate Officers and Management up to 15 May 2006
8. Election of External Auditors
9. Election of Board of Directors
10. Other Business
11. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on 31 March 2006 are entitled to notice and to vote at this meeting. Registration will start at 2:00 p.m. and will end at 4:00 p.m. Kindly present any proof of identification, such as driver's license, passport, company I.D. or SSS/GSIS I.D. Aside from personal identification, representatives of corporate stockholders and other entities should also present a duly sworn secretary's certificate or a similar document showing his or her authority to represent the corporation or entity.

Should you be unable to attend the meeting, you may want to execute a proxy in favor of a representative. In accordance with the amended By-Laws of the Corporation, proxies must be presented to the Secretary for inspection, validation and record at least seven (7) days prior to the opening of the stockholders' meeting. We enclose a proxy form for your convenience.

For those unable to attend the Stockholders' Meeting in Cebu, a Stockholders' Briefing will be conducted in Manila on 17 May 2006 at 3:00 p.m. at Rizal Ballroom A, Makati Shangri-la Hotel, Makati City.

For the Board of Directors.

(sgd)M. JASMINE S. OPORTO
Corporate Secretary

NTC to revoke licenses of operators violating SMS spam rules

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By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission (NTC) will revoke the license of mobile phone operators if they are found violating its guidelines on unsolicited broadcast messaging used to advertise promos to subscribers, a revised draft guideline by the agency showed.

A copy of the amended rules and regulations on broadcast messaging will also require all content providers allegedly sending the text spam promos to subscribers to register with the NTC. This will serve as basis for an application with the Department of Trade and Industry that grants permits to allow companies to advertise promos.

"Non-compliance and/or violation of any of the provision of this circular and other relevant laws, rules and regulations of this Commission shall subject the violator/respondent to cancellation or suspension of [mobile phone operators'] provisional authority or certificate of public convenience and necessity or cancellation or suspension of [content providers'] certificate of registration and imposition of the appropriate fines and penalties," the NTC revised guideline stated.

It also said that mobile phone operators and content providers will be blacklisted if they're found violating the agency's rules.

"Blacklisted mobile phone operators and content providers shall not be allowed to send any push/broadcast message," the NTC said.

The revised guideline also stressed that all complaints received by the NTC will be acted upon within 30 days.

Content providers registered with the NTC will be allowed to send promotional broadcast text messages to subscribers, according to the NTC.

Sending of spam text messages is now prohibited, the agency added. Push or broadcast messages is, however, allowed to be sent only once and should be free of charge, the agency noted.

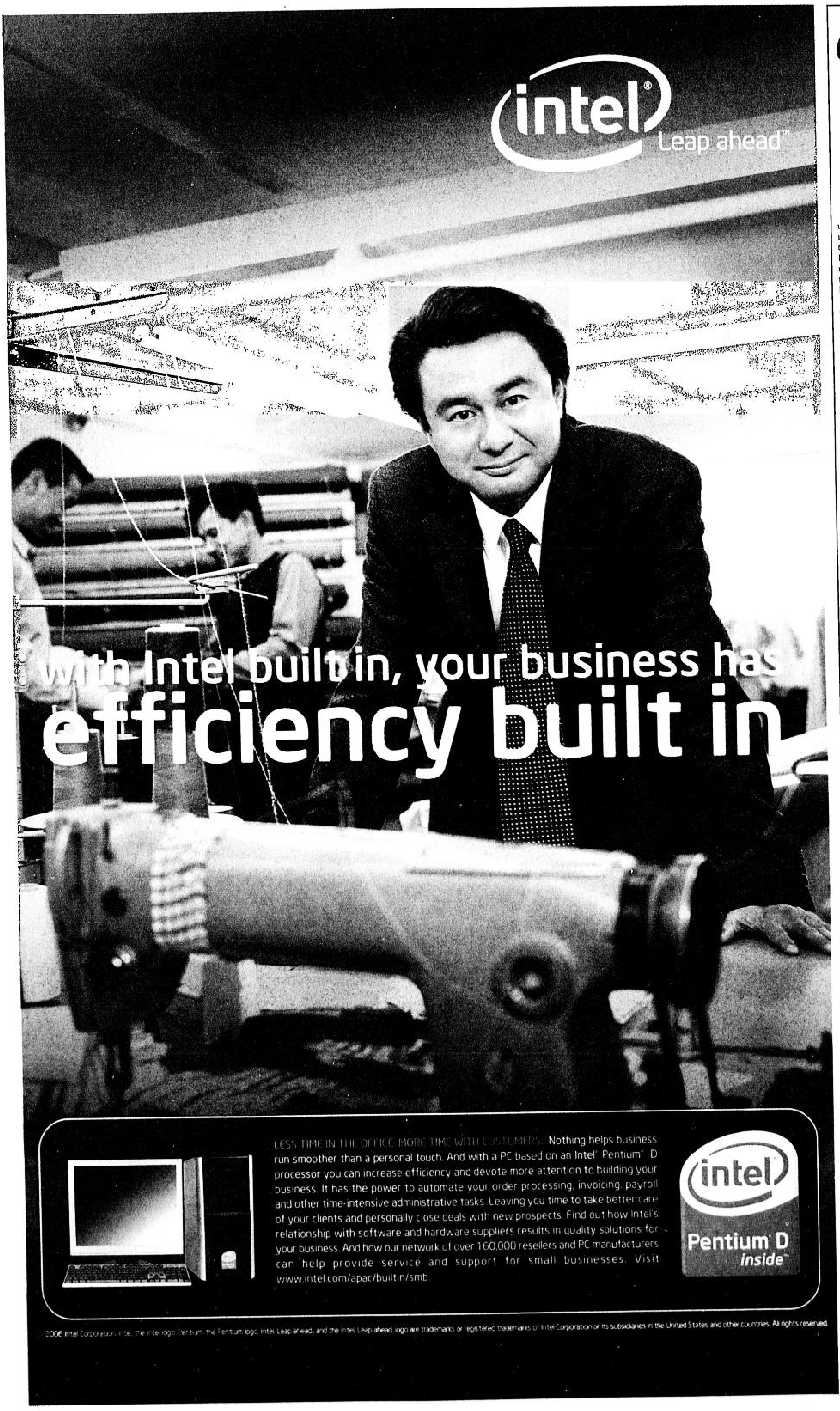
NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento said that the mobile phone operators and content providers have until May 11, 2006 to make comments on the proposed revised guideline.

"We intend to have this guideline after May 11," Sarmiento told Infotech. The revised guideline also proposes the creation of a clearinghouse "to monitor the sending of push/broadcast messages."

For suspected spam text messages, subscribers are instructed to forward the spam message to 682, which is an NTC system used as a clearinghouse.

"At the end of the message, type a slash (/) symbol and without any space, type the number or name of the message sender and send to 682; Subscribers will receive an auto reply that message has been sent to the NTC (682). After verifying that the message sent is a spam message, the Commission shall direct the concerned mobile phone operator or content provider to refund the recipient of the spam message of the charges incurred," the revised guideline said.

The NTC will then send a text message to the subscriber informing him or her of the action taken by the agency.



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intel

Tech Support and Maintenance for SMBs: Prevention and Cure

By Ricky Banaag, Country Manager, Intel Microelectronics Philippines, Inc.

Investment in information technology by small and medium business (SMBs) in Asia is skyrocketing. After weathering the economic downturn, SMBs are now looking to grow their business using information technology (IT), with analysts predicting a remarkable increase of 19% in SMB technology spending in 2004.[1] However, buying hardware is only the first step. The way this technology is managed will greatly affect how profitable the investment will be.

Support and maintenance costs SMBs a great deal of time and money. According to Gartner, the purchase price of a new personal computer (PC) accounts for only 20 to 30 per cent of the total cost of owning that PC, with the rest going to supporting and maintaining this hardware.[2] These support costs rise substantially for older systems, driving up the operational expenses that comprise most of the 70 to 80 per cent of the total cost of owning a computer.[3]

With IT investment surging and system complexity increasing, IT support is crucial to all businesses. System downtime often translates to lost business. So how should an SMB effectively manage its IT system?

The Quick Cure

When you're ill, you usually see a doctor. If you're technology shows symptoms of a glitch, call your "digital doctor" - your IT vendor help desk. Below are some tips to assist the help desk technician assess and fix the problem:

Right problem, right person

The most important element to remember when talking to a helpdesk is patience! Just as your doctor takes time to walk through your symptoms before developing a diagnosis, help desk technicians must also walk through your system's symptoms. Try to be patient as the technician assesses your problem and identifies a solution.

Occasionally, the help desk technician may require a second opinion to accurately pin point the cause of the problem. Just as you would seek the advice of a medical specialist, don't be afraid to ask for assistance from a higher level engineer or manager if needed. It can sometimes save quite a bit of time.

Keep Detailed Logs

Like doctors keep records of your medical history, keep a record each of your technical problems and the solutions offered by the helpdesk. The effort spent documenting problems can help reduce the long-term costs of your system support, as you will know how to resolve these problems if they arise again.

The Preventative Approach

No one likes being ill, which is why the healthcare concept of "prevention" rather than "cure" is growing in popularity. Most people would rather avoid getting sick, rather than visiting a doctor on a regular basis. Adopting a preventative approach also works for technology systems. In the case of technology, prevention starts with good technology planning. Below are a few considerations to help prevent system downtime and reduce maintenance costs

Regular PC Replacement Program

Regardless of brand, your technology should be current. The optimum lifecycle is three years for a desktop PC and two years for notebooks. Beyond this timeframe, maintenance and upgrades can cost more than replacing the entire PC! It may sound strange, but without scheduling regular updates, companies tend to practice a "crash and burn" approach to IT maintenance. By replacing computers only when they fail, they not only miss out on the productivity gains of more current computers, but they also wind up with dozens of different hardware configurations and out-of-date software, costing more in ongoing maintenance long term. Orchestrating technical support for such a haphazard system will be a full time job, even if you only have a few of these ailing computers.

Q: Why buy the best PC I can afford?

A: A sufficiently powerful, balanced system allows multitasking to operate effectively. For example, PCs equipped with the latest technologies such as the Intel® Pentium® D processor enables users to multitask and process background tasks more efficiently. With two processor cores, a PC can handle more applications or programs at one time. This means, more system maintenance, such as virus software, backup and indexing, can occur while you are doing work, which means less time spent on the phone trying to fix problems.

Because aging computers can't handle complex applications, they can be a huge IT burden. This sidetracks you from your core business responsibilities and increases maintenance overhead, leading to a more complex and costly system. The older the PC, the more costs accumulate. Time, human resources and component parts are required and repairs can be expensive.

Keeping your system simple

Keeping your system simple by standardizing hardware and software can lower the support costs in the long run. Imagine how much time and effort is wasted re-inventing the wheel if you need to trouble-shoot the same problem of your PCs from different manufacturers.

Conclusion

Managing an IT system should be looked at as an opportunity, not a burden. When your system is running smoothly, its benefits cannot be underestimated. A study in the U.S. found that 93% of all companies that lost their data for 10 days or more filed for bankruptcy within one year of the disaster. A full shutdown like this is uncommon. It usually only results when a company does little or nothing to maintain their IT system's integrity. A little downtime can be all the time your competitors need to move in. But with these simple maintenance techniques, you will be ahead of the game.

# # #

Other names and brands may be claimed as the property of others.

[1] http://www.ami-partners.com/ami/sections/press/april_2004_top_ten_trends_pr_with_slides.doc, excludes Japan

[2] Gartner Research (June 2003) "Linux Desktop TCO: An Overview", Gartner, Inc. June 19, 2003

[3] The Financial Aspects of PC Fleet Management, www.intel.com

[4] "Information security: your responsibility as a company director or manager," Australian Business News magazine June/July 2003

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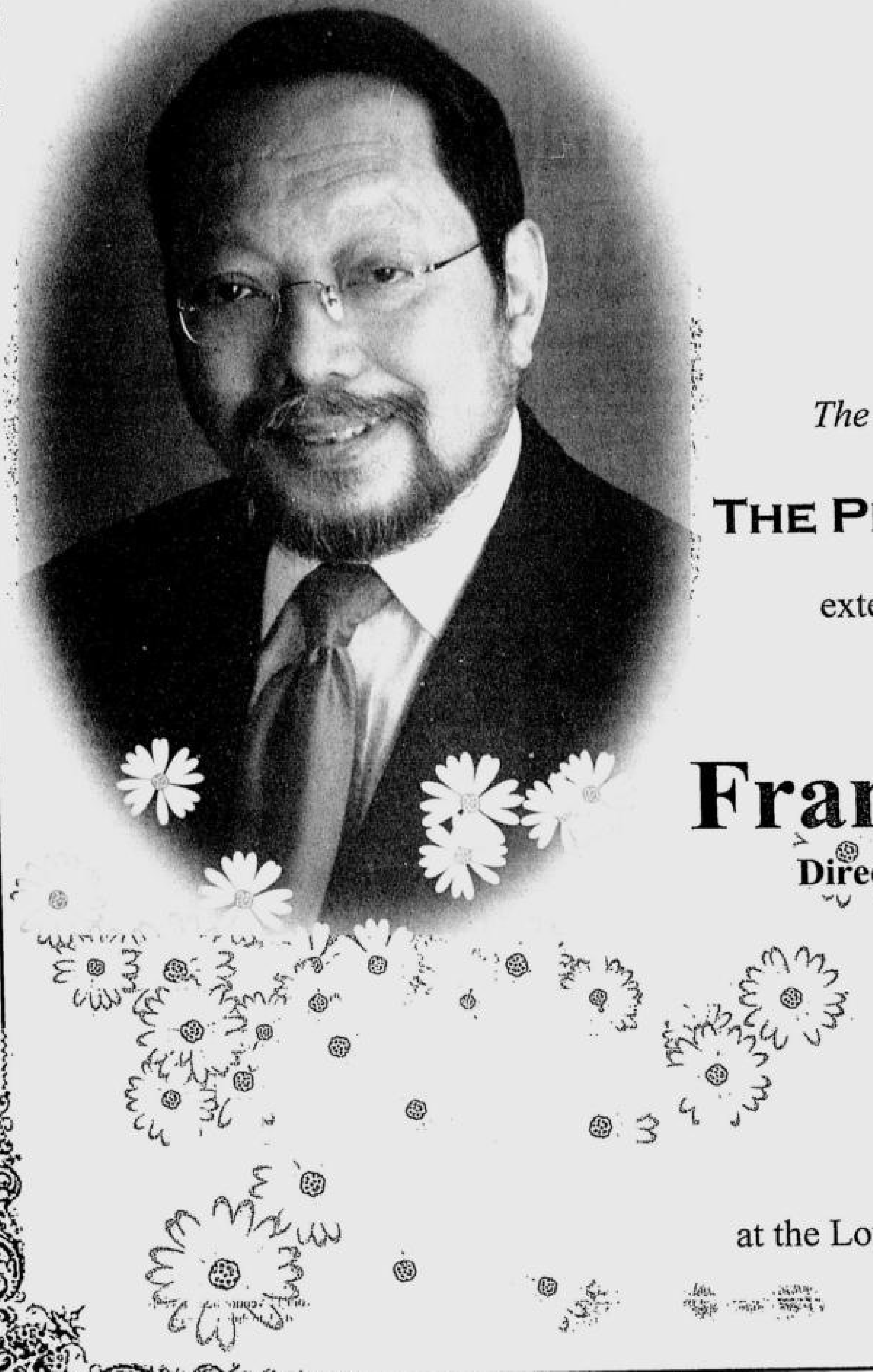

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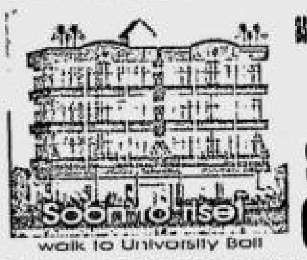

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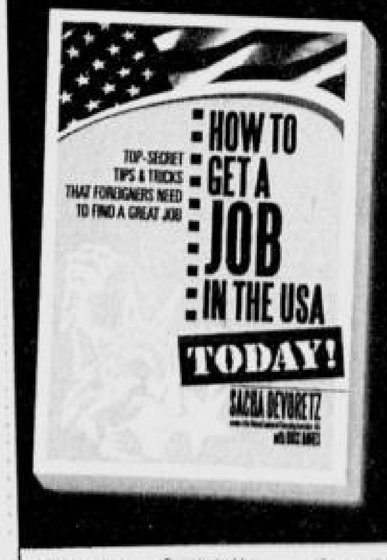

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Filipino pleads guilty to hacking, faces imprisonment

By Erwin Lemuel Oliva
Contributor

FILIPINO JEFFRIC CARLOS ABIERA, 22, HAS pleaded guilty to violating the E-commerce Law, and now faces possible imprisonment from one to two years, court records showed.

Wearing a sky blue polo shirt, jeans and sneakers during his arraignment, Abiera became the second hacker to be convicted in a Philippine court. The first Filipino to be convicted of hacking was JJ Maria Giner.

Following several postponements of Abiera's arraignment, Judge Alfredo Ampuan of Branch 33 of the Metropolitan Trial Court of Quezon City recommended that Abiera be sentenced to one to two years of imprisonment and a minimum fine of P100,000.

After Abiera pleaded guilty in court, the judge asked him to reconsider his decision, noting the weight of the crime. But the soft-spoken Abiera was unperturbed and reiterated his plea.

A former call center agent, Abiera reportedly used a Sitel Phil. Corp. system to illegally secure credit card information from sister firm Sistel USA, court records showed.

"Documentary evidence further shows that respondent Abiera as a call center agent of Sitel Philippines gained entry into the computer system of the credit card processing company affiliated with Sitel which IP addresses he accessed without authority or consent from the owner in order to acquire credit card information," a copy of the resolution from the Department of Justice (DoJ) indicated.

He is said to have committed the crime on December 7, 2005, December 19, 2005, and January, 17, 2006, which was the same day of his entrapment and arrest, a copy of the DoJ resolution signed by state prosecutor Geronimo Sy said.

He used the stolen credit card information to make several online purchases initially amounting to $87.60 and then $567.59 at an e-commerce website. The goods were then requested to be delivered to Abiera's address in San Juan, Metro Manila. Both purchases were disputed by the credit card holder, which raised suspicions of fraud.

Court records showed that a certain Mary Fe Hasan, president of Fastnet Communications, was among the early complainants whose affidavit was eventually used by the National Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice to subsequently file criminal charges against Abiera.

Abiera has paid a fine of P100,000 which was set by the local court.

State Prosecutor Sy said that this case is another victory for government, which is pursuing 25 cases of violation of the E-commerce Law to date.

25 E-commerce law violation cases lined up

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

AT LEAST 25 CASES RELATED TO violation of Republic Act 8792, also known as the Electronic Commerce Law, is pending with the Department of Justice, a state prosecutor told INQ7.net following Thursday's conviction of a local Filipino hacker in court.

State Prosecutor Geronimo Sy disclosed that the DoJ is also scheduled to lodge another case in court by end of May 2006.

He is confident that government is set to "score a big one" in the next case.

Meanwhile, Sy said that the conviction of Filipino hacker JJ Maria Giner in a local court has served as a deterrent to more attacks.

"We've seen attacks on government websites go down following the news of conviction," he said.

Sy revealed that Giner who applied for probation to avoid a jail term is back in Iloilo studying law.

On Thursday, Filipino Jeffric Carlos Abiera, 22, pleaded guilty to violating the E-commerce Law, and now faces possible imprisonment from one to two years, court records showed.

Abiera became the second hacker to be convicted in Philippine courts.

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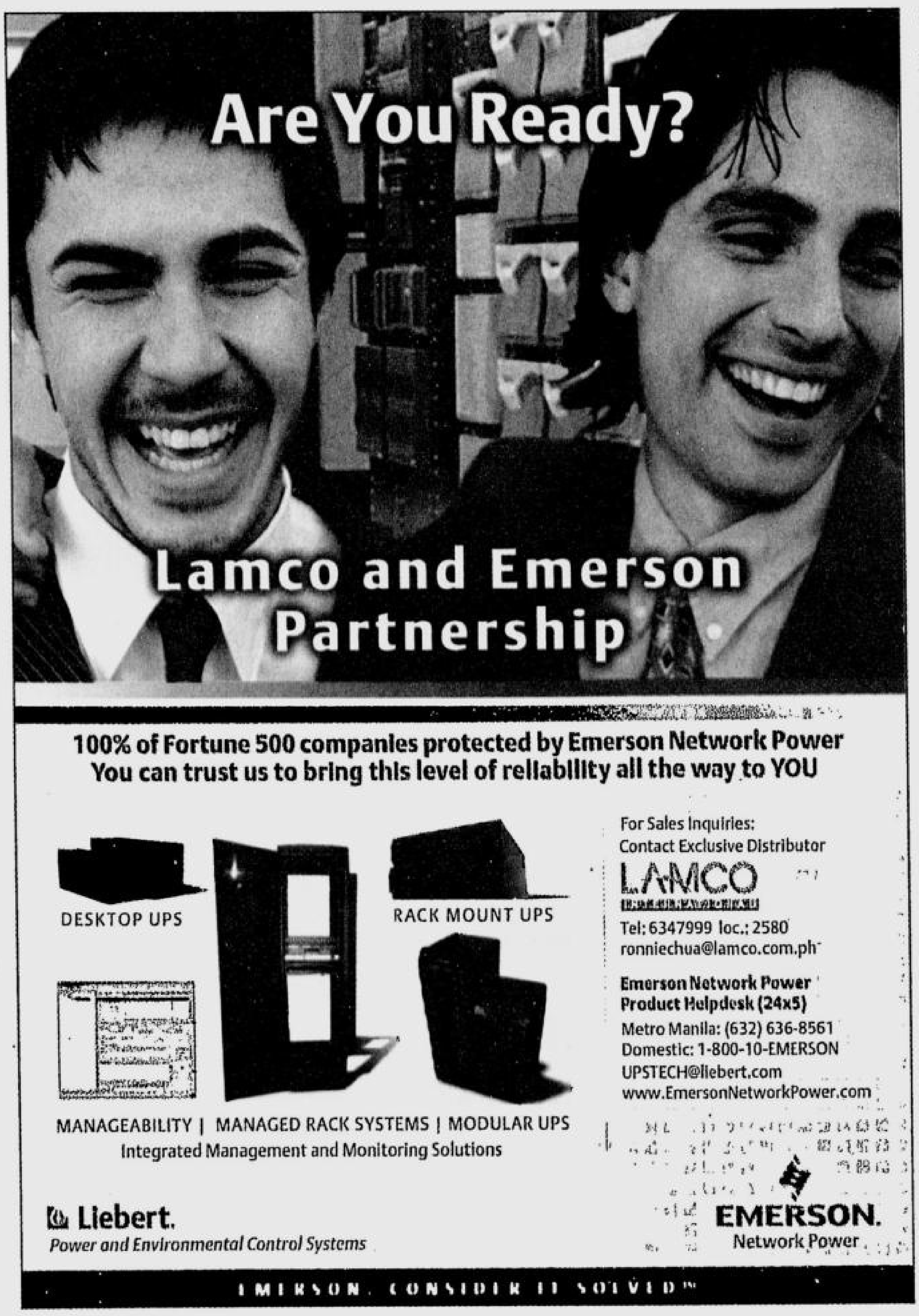

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Hailing a cab through text messaging

Can't find a cab in Makati? Use your cellphone and text for one

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

CABS ARE HARDEST TO FIND ON RAINY days and Sundays, especially in central business districts like Makati City. Queues are often long at taxi stands and if people are lucky to find a cab outside of the queue, they are often forced to pay a "fixed" price after much heated debates with drivers.

Hailing a cab or a taxi in Metro Manila is both a frustrating and depressing exercise. But people have no choice but to deal with it.

Given this problem, people at MobileArts, a Philippine mobile solutions company, have started contemplating on developing a solution that marries text messaging and location-based service, now available as a means to track down stolen vehicles in the country.

"This is a hailing service for taxis," said Elmar Gomez, chief operating officer of MobileArts.

With a mature market for text-based services in the country, Gomez said that it was but natural for them to develop an application that would allow people to use their mobile phones to hail a cab.

"Initially, we want to target 1,000 taxi drivers, and limit the service to the central business districts," the executive added.

Aptly called "TaxiTXT," the soon-to-be-launched text service is currently being tested by the local company.

According to Gomez, the service works this way: taxi drivers can register with the service. They are asked to provide general information such as their name, plate number, and body number, among others. The drivers can then send a text message, "Text PILA" to a certain number, which is actually a computer server maintained by MobileArts. This text message initiates a virtual queue.

Customers, on the other end, need to send a text message "TAXI TO <destination>" to a certain number. The destination need not be specific, Gomez said. The system then determines the nearest registered taxi driver then alerts him.

Once the taxi driver is alerted, the system then initiates a chat between the driver and the potential customer.

"All numbers are not revealed to protect a customer's privacy," the executive said.

The whole exercise will cost drivers and customers around P7.50 per transaction, Gomez said.

"For taxi drivers, this will help them save on gas because they can just wait for customers to hail them via text. Some call-a-taxi services charge at least P50," he said.

MobileArts is currently recruiting more taxi drivers to use its service.

"The challenge right now is whether or not they'll use it," said Gomez.

Globe offers commercial '3.5G'

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

AYALA-OWNED GLOBE TELECOM UNVEILED its commercial "3.5G" service days after rival operator Smart Communications announced the commercial availability of its 3G service in the country.

3G or third generation mobile services is a high-speed mobile network that allows subscribers to make video calls, watch streaming videos or television, and browse the Internet at speeds comparable to broadband, wired Internet.

3.5G, however, is the next evolutionary step toward a faster network that uses what the industry calls High Speed Downlink Packet Access or HSDPA.

Globe executives on Wednesday said that the commercial HSPDA service is now available to local consumers following a soft launch on March 30, 2006.

While HSDPA handsets are not yet available in the local market, Globe said it has already signed up clients to the service.

This service, which competes with Philippine Long Distance Telephone's WeRoam service, allows users to connect their notebooks or laptops to a HSDPA network using a PCMCIA network card worth 13,000 to 15,000, according to Patricio Pineda III, head of business planning of Globe Telecom's wireless group.

Globe Telecom is offering HSDPA service for a monthly fee of about P2,000, which provides unlimited wireless Internet connection to Globe Telecom's HSPDA network.

"This is really more for laptop users," Pineda added.

On March 2006, Smart Communications gave local media a peek into its HSDPA service but noted that the commercial launch will happen within the year.

Meanwhile, Gerardo Ablaza, Globe Telecom President and Chief Executive Officer, announced that the operator will also price its 3G services at the same level of its 2G service.

"Our pricing philosophy is to make 3G more affordable," he said, adding that Globe market studies showed that local consumer behavior on 3G service tends to be "short-duration usage."

"We call that usage snacking so we made our 3G snacking pricing the best in the market," the Globe executive said.

Pineda said that 3G video calls will cost around P4.50 to P6.50 a minute among Globe subscribers.

The cost of downloading on 3G content will also cost .15 centavos per kilobyte, which is the same price charged using the General Packet Radio Service or GPRS network, he added.

For streaming video, Globe will charge subscribers P5 per minute. "There will be no daily fees, viewing fees," he added.

Pineda said that Globe has around 100,000 Globe subscribers using 3G-enabled handsets.

During a press conference, Ablaza said that Globe is investing around $100 million for its nationwide rollout of the 3G and HSPDA networks over the next few years.

Globe has bought equipment from Nokia, Ericsson and Siemens for its 3G and HSPDA network, Pineda added.

"Given the nature of our economy in the Philippines, there is the challenge on how to make 3G services affordable to this market," Ablaza said.

HSDPA is a mobile technology that improves the downlink speeds of 3G networks using the wideband CDMA (WCDMA) standard. The mobile industry says that HSPDA is part of an evolutionary path of 3G enhancements.

The GSM Association, for one, said that HSDPA boosts the air interface capacity of WCDMA networks by two times and delivers up to five-fold increase in downlink data speeds or up to 1.6 Mbps with peaks of up to 1.8 Mbps.

It shortens round-trip time between network and terminals and reduces variance in downlink transmission delay.

While the current 3G allows web browsing and music and video downloads using the newer handsets, HSDPA is a faster version of 3G. It will boost throughput in the 3G networks, allowing applications like motion video streaming, advanced multiplayer games, and parallel voice-data-video services.

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BUSINESS*Monday*

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

Churning out $6B worth of ideas yearly

To ensure consumers get best technology

By Stella O. Gonzales

BEIJING—"INNOVATION IS AT THE HEART of the company's success."

This was how Craig Mundie, Microsoft Corp.'s chief technical officer for advanced strategies and policy, described the role of research in the company.

Mundie, who reports to Microsoft chair Bill Gates, said they wanted to ensure that only the most advanced technologies find their way to their customers. This is why Microsoft invests about $6 billion annually, or about 17 percent of its revenue, in research and development.

The company is in the world's top 10 in R&D investment.

Mundie was in Beijing to attend Microsoft Research (MSR) Asia's Innovation Day 2006 that showcased more than 30 never-before-seen technologies in search, digital entertainment, multimedia and user interface technologies.

MSR employs more than 700 people in five laboratories located in Redmond, Washington; Silicon Valley, California; Cambridge, England; Beijing, China; and Bangalore, India.

It also has hundreds of interns. The MSR Asia office in Beijing currently has 250 interns—a large number are from Chinese universities; others are from the US and other countries.

Hsiao-Wuen Hon, MSR Asia assistant managing director, said that of around 2,200 interns who have worked in the Beijing office since it was established in November 1998, around 70 were subsequently hired by the company. The rest went back to their respective countries where they put into use their learnings from the company.

"Some were even hired by the competition," Hon said, smiling.

Maturing lab

MSR Asia managing director Harry Shum said the Asia Pacific office has so far produced 201 technology transfers, including innovations found in Windows Live, Microsoft Office 2003 and Windows Vista, among other products.

"As the lab continues to mature, we will see an increasing number of technologies making their way into Microsoft products to the benefit of Microsoft customers around the world," Shum said.

MSR is like other R&D institutions with an "academic environment" that employs an open research culture subjected to peer review. Researchers produce papers that are subjected to intensive review by their peers not only in Microsoft but in other companies as well.

MSR Asia has so far published 1,200 papers for conferences and journals, sharing results of its work with the research community and the public, which in turn fosters innovation.

CHURNING/ B2-2

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Preparing employees for life after retirement

JUST LIKE BIRTH, TAXES AND death, retirement is inevitable—the natural culmination of a career especially when one is formally employed. Sadly, however, the transition that accompanies retirement can be jarring if not outright devastating, so that there is a need to prepare properly for this major life change.

"Planning for the retirement of employees is an important priority for us, especially because of our company's high retention rate," says Renee Valdez, Recruitment, Learning and Employee Programs Head of Nestlé Philippines Inc. (NPI).

Nestlé has more than 3,000 employees nationwide. The firm's average employee turnover between the years 2000 to 2005 was only five to six percent, with the average age of the work force currently 37 to 38 years old. The retirement age at NPI is 60 years old. The average number of years employed at retirement is 25 years.

Fritz Adorable, the company's Corporate Compensation Benefits and Policies head who oversees retirement administration, says NPI is perhaps the only major consumer firm in the country with both noncontributory and contributory retirement plans.

Noncontributory plan

Started in 1968, the Nestlé noncontributory plan covers all of the company's regular employees. Under the plan, only the company contributes to the retirement fund, which is set aside to pay for the retirement benefits of the retiring employees. An employee who has reached the normal retirement age of 60 will have the option of either getting a lump sum or a pension.

"The noncontributory retirement plan is a defined benefit plan. This means that each employee knows exactly what he or she will receive upon retirement," says Fritz. "For example, a retiring employee with 30 years of service will receive two months' salary per year of service. If he opts for a monthly pension, and depending on his years of service, the pension could approximate his net take-home pay as an employee."

NPI is also one of the very few, if not the only consumer company in the Philippines that offers the option of a pension. Other firms normally provide only a lump sum retirement benefit. Nestlé's pension, if opted for in the noncontributory plan, continues even after the retired employee's death, with 60 percent allotted for the spouse for life or until she re-marries, and 15 percent for each legitimate, unemployed, single dependent child under the age of 21. With the pension applicable to a maximum of four children, it can add-up to 120 percent of the original amount.

Contributory plan

"Since most employees have financial obligations, they usually opt for a lump sum payment under the noncontributory plan," Fritz explains. "This is one of the major reasons why Nestlé Philippines started a contributory retirement plan which is purely voluntary on the part of the employees."

Under Nestle's contributory retirement plan, the company and the employee both contribute to a retirement fund.

Fritz explains that the contributory retirement plan is separate from, and is a supplement to the noncontributory retirement plan. "It provides the retiree an additional fund which he can use to address financial contingencies and maturing obligations that he would like to settle upon retirement."

It was only a few years ago when NPI began to establish contributory retirement plans at various work sites in cooperation with its labor unions, and today has seven such plans operating in the company's different bargaining units. "Based on collective bargaining agreements, each contributory plan is negotiable and has the nature of a savings plan," says Fritz. "Right now the contribution of employees is three percent of monthly base salary, which NPI matches with an equivalent amount. The retirement fund is invested by a fund trustee to ensure that it continues to grow and thus help provide for the financial needs of our employees at the time of their retirement."

From employment to retirement

To prepare employees for retirement, Renee says Nestlé conducts its retirement orientation program called "Change and Care" a year or so before one's retirement date. The objective of

PREPARING/ B2-2

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Reflections on the mining issues

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Dr. Niceto S. Poblador

THE PHILIPPINE MINING ACT of 1995 (RA 7942) authorizing the full resumption of mining activities in the country is arguably one of the most controversial pieces of legislation in recent memory. The Supreme Court has affirmed the constitutionality of this law in 1997, but the controversy surrounding it rages on.

That the full implementation of the Mining Act will bring about immediate economic benefits to the country is without question. Equally important, however, if not even more so, are its associated costs.

In arguing for the resumption of mining in the country, supporters of the law appear to have given too much emphasis on the short-run economic benefits from mining, which are all too real, but have downplayed its longer-lasting but less obvious dreadful consequences.

The immediate danger to life and limb arising from accidents and direct physical contamination from toxic effluents is just one of the costs of mining. Even more devastating are its longer-lasting negative effects on the country's productive capacity.

What lies under the surface of the earth is a very complex ecosystem that is not fully understood by many. Digging for mineral wealth deep in the bowels of the earth disrupts a very delicate balance, and will most certainly trigger-off a chain of largely unpredictable consequences the full impact of which will not materialize until several generations into the future. For example, the effects of toxic wastes on fresh water supplies has long been documented as the root cause of the total disappearance (or what Jared Diamond calls "collapse") of entire societies.

The potential negative impact of mining and all other forms of extractive activities on the country's future capacity to produce is a cost that will be borne by future generations for the wanton acquisitiveness of the present generation. Think of the string of natural disasters that this country has recently witnessed, and the loss of wealth and human lives that they have brought upon thousand of communities. These are the costs that the present and future generations are paying for the folly and irresponsibility of generations past.

Supporters of mining activities in the country such as the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) are fully aware of the painful tradeoffs. However, they believe that the firm and forceful implementation of the regulatory measures prescribed by the Act will prevent the damage typically associated with mining that we have experienced in the past.

I think that this assumption is too sanguine. What reasons have we to suppose that this time, government regulation will be more effective? Exactly the same regulatory system is in place. Exactly the same people are in position. And the same self-serving reasons for pursuing interests other than those of society prevail at all levels of our hopelessly inept and unreliable regulatory and administrative systems.

MAP and other like-minded professional organizations are to be commended for offering their services to help oversee the implementation of the safety provisions of the Mining Act. While their credibility and professional capability in providing useful inputs for this purpose is beyond doubt, it is too optimistic to assume that MAP or any other similarly concerned organization can be an effective factor in insuring that the environmental costs associated with mining are put within reasonable limits.

The reason, plain and simple, is the deeply rooted conflict of interests among the different stakeholders. Those who are identified with the industry—and these include the government regulators themselves who are supposed to serve the interests of society!—are expected to favor mining because it is in their personal interests to do so. (In institutional economics, this is known as the agency or incentive problem, a.k.a. as "moral hazard."). Moreover, people closely associated with the industry possess critical information that they are loath to share with MAP or anybody else. Under these circumstances, there can be no meaningful collaboration among all concerned parties.

In corporate governance, one way around the incentive problem is to put in place reward mechanisms intended to co-align the interests of the owners of the firm and those of their appointed agents. No such mechanism exists in public-sector governance. Under existing institutional arrangements, there can be no effective regulation of mining and other extractive industries that will insure that the long-run interests of society are served.

Rather than offer their oversight services to those who are directly involved with the industry such as the Philippine Chamber of Mines, the Bureau of Mines, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, MAP and other similarly inclined organizations must first legitimize their mandate through appropriate legislation. In this way, at least grudging collaboration from those whose interests are tied to the industry can be obtained.

The problem is far more complex than many of us are inclined to believe. I think that the decision to go full blast on mining—no pun intended—is a hasty one. Many questions remain unanswered: Where exactly in the country should mining be allowed and to what extent? Will the immediate financial gains from each mining project be large enough to yield profits and tax revenues and at the same time defray the costs of preserving the environment? What are the long-run economic implications of current trends in materials development technology? What technical, scientific, economic and social data and indicators should be developed to insure effective implementation and monitoring? What incentive mechanisms should be put in place to insure reasonable compliance with regulatory constraints at all levels? What are the costs associated with all these measures?

All these matters should be given serious consideration before we even allow the first mining shaft to be built. Otherwise, our hapless country will be locked further into a rut from which it can never pull itself out.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is an active academic and a knowledge management consultant. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

RENEE Valdez and Fritz Adorable

Preparing employees for life ...

From page B2-1

the two-day program is to enable a smooth transition from employment to retirement. The program includes emotional and psychological conditioning, including discussing positive plans and actions for the future.

Ties after retirenement

The program also shares investment advice from resource persons such as bank executives, and sessions on possible business options, like starting a Nestlé Ice Cream parlor or Food Services vending, or livelihood seminars by the Technological Livelihood Resources Center (TLRC). Spouses of the retiring employees are encouraged to attend.

Nestlé maintains ties with employees beyond retirement. Retirees retain the privilege of purchasing goods with discounts from the Nestlé Staff Shop located in all work sites and are invited to an annual Christmas reunion. Children of retirees are given priority consideration for employment, so that in some cases, up to three generations of a family are employed by Nestlé.

"Preparing our retirees is a serious effort. We would like them to be able to make adjustments as best as they can, to start other activities that continue to fulfill them so they will enjoy their retirement," Renee explains.

Churning out $6B worth of ideas yearly

From page B2-1

"Our best gauge of our success as a research facility is the number of patents we have filed and how many people use as reference our papers," said Kurt Akeley, also an assistant managing director at MSR Asia.

Akeley has 14 patents to his name and joined Microsoft in 2004.

Looking for talent

While there is plenty of talent among China's youth, Akeley said MSR Asia is on the lookout for highly talented people with more years of experience.

"We create an environment where people are free to generate ideas," Akeley said.

Eager researchers

Passion was evident in the eyes of the researchers who presented to members of the Asia Pacific media the prototype of their research during the open house. Most were Chinese who were in their early 20s and a few could only speak Mandarin.

All were eager to explain their projects. Some were too engrossed with the progress of their research, they could not figure out how these would ultimately help the public at large.

For example, there was the Color Sketching program that converts a photograph into a freehand sketch art image. When asked what the program might ultimately be used for, the female Chinese researcher replied: "For greeting cards?"

Or take Real-Time Rendering of Plant Leaves, which produces very impressive, life-like graphics of leaves as light strikes them, leaving shadows on some parts. Its use may not be obvious at the start, but someone explained later that the research was important in graphics hardware.

Akeley said MSR Asia does not do much of applications research. What researchers do is build systems, and some other office converts these into applications software.

So while a program like Real-Time Rendering of Plant Leaves may not be too exciting to the layman, the foundations of the research would be of much use for other applications later.

Right technology

Of the hundreds of research that are produced by its people, how does MSR Asia decide which ones should be pursued further?

"It should be state-of-the-art technology; it should benefit the users; it should benefit millions of people instead of just a few," said Jian Wang, director of MSR Asia's Incubation and Multimodal User Interface Groups.

"We make sure it's the right technology for the people," Wang added.

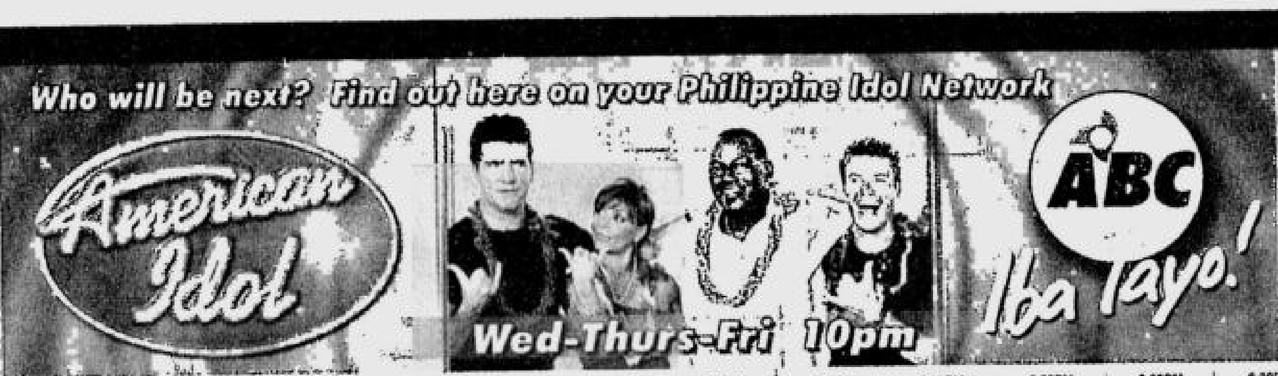
This is why tech fests like Innovation Day are important to MSR Asia: they get immediate feedback on their research.

And do MSR Asia managers have "favorite" projects?

"It's like asking a parent who his favorite is among his children," said Wei-Ying Ma, MSR Asia's research manager in the Web Search and Data Mining Group. "Each child has his own special characteristic. One can't really choose a favorite."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Monday, May 8, 2006



Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	Volleyball League				Sentro	How Clean Is Your House	ABC Action Movies				Big News	Fear Factor		Totoo TV	Insider
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto E Buzz	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Pinoy Big Brother	Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Wonderful Life	OK Fine Whatever		House	
AXN		The Devil's Own						The 4400		PSI Factor (Season III)		Sports Disaster IV		When Disasters Strike		Lost (Season II)			
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Si Malakas, Si Maganda At Si Mahinhin		Bata, Bata Paano Ka Ginawa				Wasabi				Aishite Imasu				Sagad Sa Init			
Cinemax			High Noon (3:20 PM)			Prototype (4:50 PM)			The Ticket			Pleasantville				Implicated			Beastmaster III: The Eye Of Braxus
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		What Should You Do?		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Mastermind	Law & Order		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Crossing Jordan		Bones		The Closer	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven That's So Trendy Week	Wonderful World Of Disney			Black Hole High	So Little Time	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '04 Sims Billiards Championships		Pool Snooker World Pool Masters '03 Holland		Asian X Games '05 Presented by Kia		Extreme Programming Sports Wired		Atlantic Coast Conf Basketball: N Carolina vs Virg Tech				Sportscenter Asia	LPGA Golf Franklin American Mortgage C'ship				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		America's Next Top Model 4		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		America's Next Top Model 4		ET Weekend	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	The Biggest Loser		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion	Chaplet Of Mercy/Angelus	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	G.K. Chesterton: The Apostle Of Common Sense II	Threshold Of Hope		Sunday Night With (Encore) Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/Angelus	Good Or Evil, Who Decides?	The Gospel Of John	Freedom & Authority	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Fox Report Sunday		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Snow White Sweet Love		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Love Of The Condor Heroes		Jewel In The Palace		Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Child Of Our Time 2002						Bewitched	The Nanny	Family Law III				Judging Amy					Judging Amy (11:45 PM)
HBO		Doorways			Thoughtcrimes			The Last Ride			Mo' Money			Miss Congeniality 2: Armed And Fabulous				New York Minute (10:55PM)	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gamburger	Gosaurer	Rojin-Oh	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gosaurer
IBC 13		EZ Shop		Bottomline		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		NBA Legends						Global Family Series	IBC News Tonight	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Jack Yard	The Late Show David Letterman				Afterburn		X-Men Evolution	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Family Guy	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Interiors By Design	Decorating Style	Decorating Cents	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Hot Off The Grill	E! Extra Celebrity Adventures		NY Fashion Week	Martha		Radical Sabbatical	Genuine Article	How Do I Look	
MTV Philippines		Wildboyz		Making the Video RHCP Dani California	Pop Inc		2006 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Hits		Get Spotted	Homecoming	Massive	Making the Movie MI3	TRL		Wildboyz		MTV Summer Bodies	Brand New
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXILOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mobile MYX	Top Picks	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic		Ultimate Survivor																	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas...	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Ray Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition		Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly OddParents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly OddParents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			May Lamok Sa Bahay Ni Kulambo				Coach				Freestyle Acrobatics				Muling Buksan Ang Puso				Lagablab Sa Paraiso
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zenith	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moris		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	H2O Hanaba...Over!		News On Q	[illegible]		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon News	Entertainment Tonight	Mission Impossible 3	Scare Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Cargo For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports							IBF China Masters Mixed Dbls Finals			Sagupaan		2006 NBA Playoffs 1st Round					Solar Sports Desk	Table Tennis World Team Championships	
Sports Plus			Wild Side	Golf Today	FIFA Preview Series 12	Ultimate Fighting Championship				Arena Football Grand Rapids @ Austin						Wachovia C'ship Finals			
Star Movies			Spartan (3:45 PM)				Behind The Camera: The Unauthorized Story Of Diff'rent Strokes			Diamonds Are Forever				Soul Assassin			Five Children And It (10:40PM)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids (Series 2)	Still Standing	King Of Queens	Frasier	Monk		Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids (Series 2)
Studio 23		Masked Rider Ryuki				Batman Beyond	Sports Report	Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Bachelor Season 6		Charmed (8:20 PM)	Lost (9:10 PM)		News Central	Miss Match		Travel Time

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Workaholic CEO keeps staff on toes

From page B2-4

through the elite program for bankers at Citibank's headquarters.

"It was a crucial test for us who were the first selected trainees from the rank and file group. It was a test whether a non-degree holder or a person without a perceived pedigree could make it into the elite world of bankers at that time," he recalls.

David trained at the New York headquarters with the rest of the so-called "Golden Boys " of banking—who were chosen because they were master degree holders from renowned US schools, including Harvard, Stanford, UCLA and Northwestern. The program was then restricted to males.

"It was a one-year intensive program from the ground. It was a challenge to outdo each other. To me, it is a test and mastery of one's self, more than anything else, because you are in a no-mercy situation. Either you make it or you don't," he narrates.

He says his 15-year experience at Citibank molded him into a professional banker, and it kept him overseas until 1997. From 1984 to 1997, David was part of the management group of the Bank of Hawaii, Pratt Capital Asia Ltd. and Unicorp Finance Limited in Hong Kong and the PT United Bank in Indonesia.

Before that, he had brief stints as president and CEO of Producers Bank of the Philippines and Intercorporate Bank.

He returned to the country for good in 1997 and was named CEO and chair of the Export and Industry Bank from September 1997 to September 2004.

Moving from corporate banking into development banking meant a change in mindsets for David.

The value of change

He says that his passion for banking and finance has deepened and even went to new heights when he appreciated the DBP's mandate.

David considers going into development banking as a crucial turning point in his career.

"The mindset of a corporate banking is basically to generate profits. With development banking, what matters is not just your bottom line, but also keeping loan rates accessible to those in need. We have to be concerned about how our loan portfolio can make a deeper impact on generating employment for the country," he says.

He says that this commitment to DBP's mandate is critical in inculcating the value of accountability to the DBP senior managers and staff.

David encourages his people to work in teams to draw and rely on each others' talents and abilities.

"As a team leader, there must be accountability. If you are group head or manager, you are responsible for drawing out the best from your staff. You help him assess what should be done in a certain situation. If somehow he gives a poor performance, you should be accountable for that, too. Mutual respect and accountability are very important elements in the workplace," he adds.

For a manager to lead his group, he must first show his personal commitment and inspire excellence, David says.

"With accountability, if the work has been done, the rewards and recognition must come in. It would allow the employee to be proud that he or she is part of this institution that recognizes his or her work," he says.

He admits that working with a government-owned bank has its own politics but the values of professionalism and transparency must prevail at all costs.

"The changing world needs a new mindset and this is an openness to change. You should be malleable, resilient and you should be able to respond to change. ," he says.

Pili nut: More than just for eating

LEGAZPI CITY—TAGGED AS THE Philippine's almond, *pili* is at par with the macadamia nut of Australia, considered by many as a "the prime edible nut."

Rosemarie Diaz-Battung, owner of the 70-year-old Albay Pilinut Candy factory in Old Albay District says the nuts are used for the delicacies but the fiber covering the nutshell can also be eaten.

"The shell is also a good material in firing our antique ovens," she added.

The Department of Trade and Industry here says pili (Canarium ovatum) is now considered as the country's most important export nut.

Owing to its abundant supply in Bicol, especially in the province of Sorsogon, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) declared Sorsogon as the "commodity champion for pili" while the Department of Agriculture referred to pili as "flagship commodity" for the region.

Production

Among places like the Southern Tagalog, Southern Visayas, Southern Mindanao and Caraga province, Bicol is a major pili producer.

The region accounts for 82 percent of national pili production, the bulk of which comes from Sorsogon, said DTI-Bicol.

Under the agency's "One Town, One Product" (Otop) program, pili was identified as the banner product of Sorsogon City and the municipalities of Irosin, Bulusan and Sta. Magdalena in the same province.

An average pili tree bears fruit six or seven years after planting, with certain varieties producing flowers, three to four years from planting.

However, it is only in the seventh or eighth year before the tree produces around 1,000 to 1,500 nuts.

Pili trees vary in their fruit-bearing capacity, with the older ones giving more fruits.

A poor bearer produces 500 fruits or less while heavy yielders each gives from 3,000 to 5,000 fruits during the season.

An average tree produces 33 kilos of nuts in one year.

In Bicol, the pili harvest season begins in May and ends in September with the peak July. In the Visayas, particularly Samar, harvesting is in October.

Pili fruits are harvested when fully matured. The maturity index for pili nut is the full purplish black pulp of the whole nut.

Harvesting is done once a week or twice a month by climbing the tree and using a bamboo pole with a wire hook.

A scissor-hook-type pole was developed by the Bicol University College of Agriculture and Fisheries here to equip gatherers with a better harvesting device. The device has an average picking capacity of 25.54 kg per hour—higher than the traditional method.

Proper post-harvest handling of the fruits ensures good quality and a longer shelf-life of the nuts.

Non-food applications

The only known fruit oil of commercial importance in the world market today are olive and palm oils but the pili kernel is another oil source with a big market potential as pili oil is good in the manufacture of soaps, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

The pili shell can be burned as fuel and the charcoal can be used to decolorize sugar, purify air and water, eliminate jet fumes in airports and be used as either a filter or deodorizer.

The shell can also be pounded and mixed with plastics to be fashioned into crafts and decorative and souvenir items.

Shell granules are good sandblasting agents for power generators, an inexpensive replacement for the apricot seed hulls which are imported and costly to obtain.

The pili testa or seed coat like coir or sawdust can be used as a potting material for growing plants such as orchids and anthuriums.

The pili resins, also called "Manila elemi," can be used as fixative for perfumes, and for the production of lacquers, varnishes, adhesives and pharmaceuticals.

The pili timber is classified as hardwood and can be turned into furniture items and wood panels.

Pili trees, strong and resistant to strong winds, are known to be good avenue trees owing to their good form and cool shade. They are used to line highways, parks and playgrounds. Unlike deciduous trees, they do not shed their leaves, which means that an area lined with pili trees will remain clean and free from dried leaves.

Market and economy

Local food processors absorb almost all of the supply of pili here in Bicol.

However, according to the DTI, the Philippines is able to export pili nuts to the United States, Hawaii, Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan and China.

Here in Bicol, pili provides additional income to some 13,435 farmers with an average of 10 pili trees in their farms and to the laborers hired as harvesters.

The processing industry generates employment for people such as traders, processors, assemblers, factory workers, storekeepers and other services in the industry.

A DTI research quoted Richard A. Hamilton of the University of Hawaii and also a macadamia breeder who said the current status of pili is equivalent to that of macadamia some 30 years ago, by far the clearest indication that the pili nut has a great potential of developing into a major industry. *Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Electronics firm posts big gains in RP market

SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES Inc. posted sales of $300 million last year, a 35 percent year on year increase.

The increase is higher than the 22 percent jump in sales posted in the Southeast Asia and Oceania regions from $7.3 billion in 2004 to a record $8.9 billion in 2005. Samsung earlier announced record global earnings of $57 billion leveraging on its semiconductors and LCD panels.

Over the past years, Samsung has pursued an aggressive marketing stance.

Last Thursday, it held its Samsung Digital Partners AV Roadshow where it showcased its new range of products aimed at getting market leadership in digital technology.

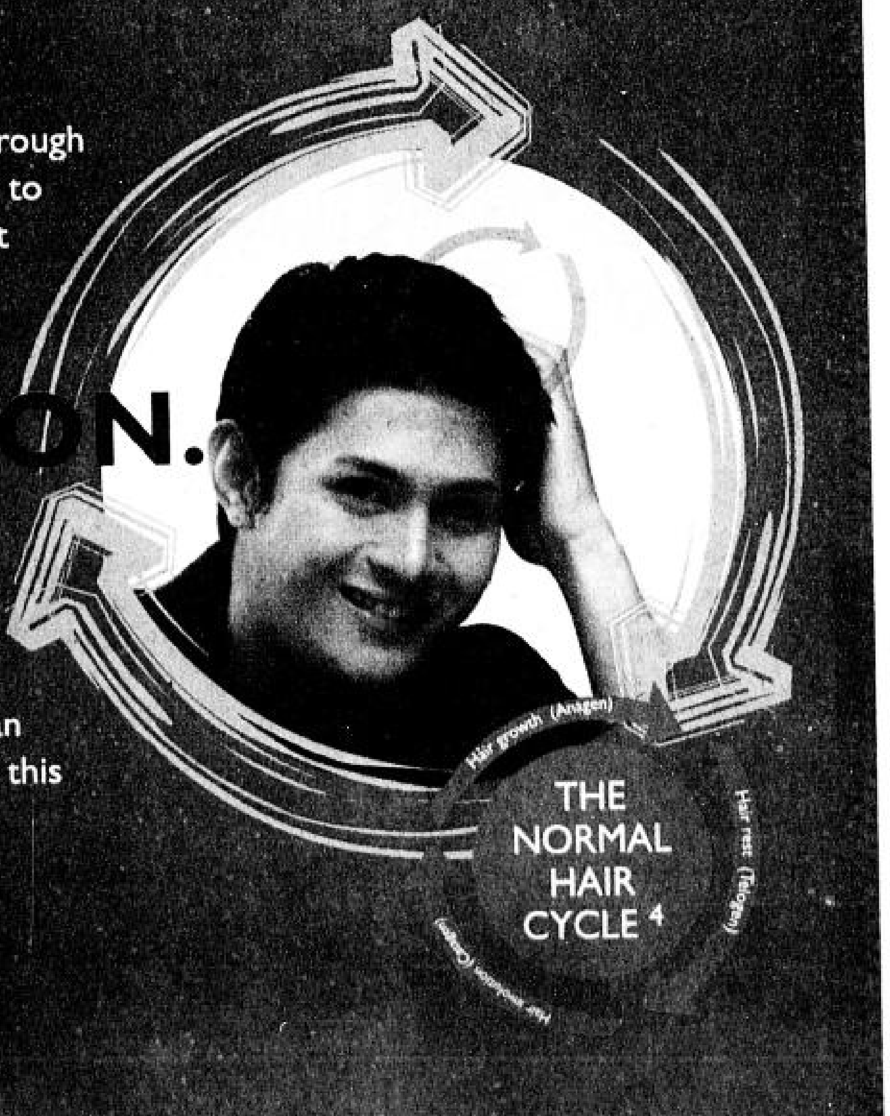
"The digital entertainment landscape is undergoing an unstoppable transformation and we are excited to lead the revolution in digital convergence. We pledge to bring about a richer and more dynamic way of life with our breakthrough research and insight into the future of digital convergence," Samsung Electronics Philippines Inc. head Hyuck Jae Shim told the firm's dealers.

DONG Ha Jang and Spencer Shim of Samsung

Showcased were its high-definition television, audio-visual, and home and mobile entertainment range—the high selling electronics items today.

Leading the pack of cutting-edge technologies at the event is Samsung's R7 Series LCD TVs. The sleek panel is built with the world's first hidden bar type speakers.

Shim added, "We have seen explosive growth in the demand for LCD TVs in the region lately and the market potential in Southeast Asia is expected to hit $2.4 billion by 2008. In fact, in January this year, our R5 Series has hit the million mark in unit sales a year after its introduction in February 2005. With the upcoming World Cup and the timely launch of the R7 Series, we are confident of capturing the surge in the sales of LCD TVs generated by the World Cup craze."



You can win the war against MPHL or Male Pattern Hair Loss. Through the years, a big proportion of the male population has been found to have increased levels of DHT (dihydrotestosterone) in the scalp[1]. It disrupts the normal cycle of hair growth[2], leaving thousands of men with wounded confidence even at an early age.

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Workaholic CEO keeps staff on toes

By Christine A. Gaylican

DAVID

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF THE Philippines president and chief executive officer Reynaldo G. David has unleashed a new energy in the organization that fueled the bank's growth last year.

Barely a year at the the helm of the bank, DBP's earnings shot up by 75 percent to P2.8 billion as of October 2005 compared to the P1.6 billion earned in the same period in 2004.

A self-confessed workaholic, David follows a strict work schedule that somehow kept the DBP's work force on their toes. His staff says that he is the kind of boss who would work very late to finish all his paperwork.

Golden Boy

"I simply believe that one should go beyond the tasks assigned to be done," he shares. "The true work of a CEO is to bring the experience into the table and show the best way as to how tasks should be done. This would make it easier for others to follow and perform the bank's mandate and professionalize development banking in the country."

David says he developed his work ethic at Citibank, where he received extensive training.

He was one of the few bankers who graduated from the Citibank's Executive Development Program in 1964. After earning his degree from Dela Salle University and passing the board for Certified Public Accountants, David was hired by Citibank. Less than a year later, David and his three other colleagues were chosen to go

WORKAHOLIC/B3

Replacing complacency

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

ONE OF THE BIGGEST TEMPTATIONS LEADers of successful organizations face is to stop thinking big. After a taste of success, even the best and brightest leaders suddenly start to think complacently. When a company gets on a roll, some leaders tighten up and start playing it safe. They stop playing to win and begin playing not to lose. Where they once thought big and new, now they think incrementally.

This temptation is a reality with a lot of sports teams. How many times have we seen teams lose their momentum and then lose the game because instead of playing to win, they began to play not to lose? They get ahead, but then they pull back and stop playing with the intensity that earned them the lead.

The same temptation traps company executives. With the organization exceeding expectations and making record profits, the leadership gets excited. The organization appears to be cruising toward its best year ever, when all of a sudden the focus shifts from gaining momentum to sustaining momentum. The moment leadership changes focus, momentum vanishes.

I like to think of momentum as the great exaggerator. When you have it, people think you're better than you are. You're on a roll and everybody is amazed by your success. When you lose momentum, people think you're worse than you are. Momentum magnifies your performance, and positive momentum can be a potent force to push you forward.

When things are on a roll, don't sit on the ball—run up the score! In other words, when you've got momentum going for you, put the pedal to the metal. Take off. Ignite momentum. As I wrote in "Thinking for a Change," "We are today where our thoughts brought us, and we will be tomorrow where our thoughts take us." When we stop thinking big as leaders and dwell upon protecting past successes, we start to think conservatively. The big thoughts that gave us a big year are replaced by conservative thoughts which will give us a mediocre year.

Let me give you four strategies that will keep your momentum moving in the right direction.

1. When you're doing well, go shopping.

When you're doing well, instead of patting yourself on the back, go shopping. Look around for somebody that's bigger, better, faster, and smarter than you are. Study their successes and benchmark your results against theirs. I did this as a young leader, because very quickly in my field I had successes. Instead of being content as the number one leader in my organization, I started going to other organizations where I wouldn't be in the top 100. It was an exercise in humility; but I immediately realized the way to refocus wasn't to compare myself against everyone I was beating, but to compare myself with somebody better than I was.

2. Stir up inspirational dissatisfaction.

Inspirational dissatisfaction does not mean you are never pleased or satisfied. Nor is it a license to beat yourself up or come down hard on your people. Instead, it's a creative awareness that you can do better. You can do more to improve personally and to invest exhaustively in the growth of your team. This state of mind unlocks your comfort zone and prompts you to keep on stretching.

3. Develop a daily dose of paranoia.

There's a difference between a daily dose and an overdose of paranoia. An overdose makes you and everyone around you miserable. A daily dose is an inner rustling—a pebble in the shoe—that creates just enough discomfort to keep you continually alert and engaged. In fact, the best leaders act as though someone is out to get them, like they're on the verge of losing every customer every day.

4. Continue to set goals that stretch your team.

If you can reach your goals with a "business as usual" approach, then your goals are too small. A goal is only effective when it forces changes, big decisions and bold action.

The thinking of a leader is contagious to the team. As a leader, you broadcast your way of thinking to your people, and they are going to pick up on your signals immediately. Unsuccessful leaders focus their thinking on survival—"If I can just make it through the year." Average leaders focus their thinking on maintenance—"If I can just hold on to what I have." Successful leaders focus their thinking on continual progress.

If you're a manager who concentrates more on holding your own than on moving forward, then it's time to seize the offensive. Don't settle for what conditions force upon you. As Marcus Buckingham says, "The only thing that leaders have in common is leaders break all the rules." Great leaders don't just buy into what everybody else is saying, and they don't follow the beaten path. Great leaders are constantly creating their own conditions for success by blazing new trails.

For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please e-mail maxwell@inspire.ph or call 813-2732/03. Text God bless!

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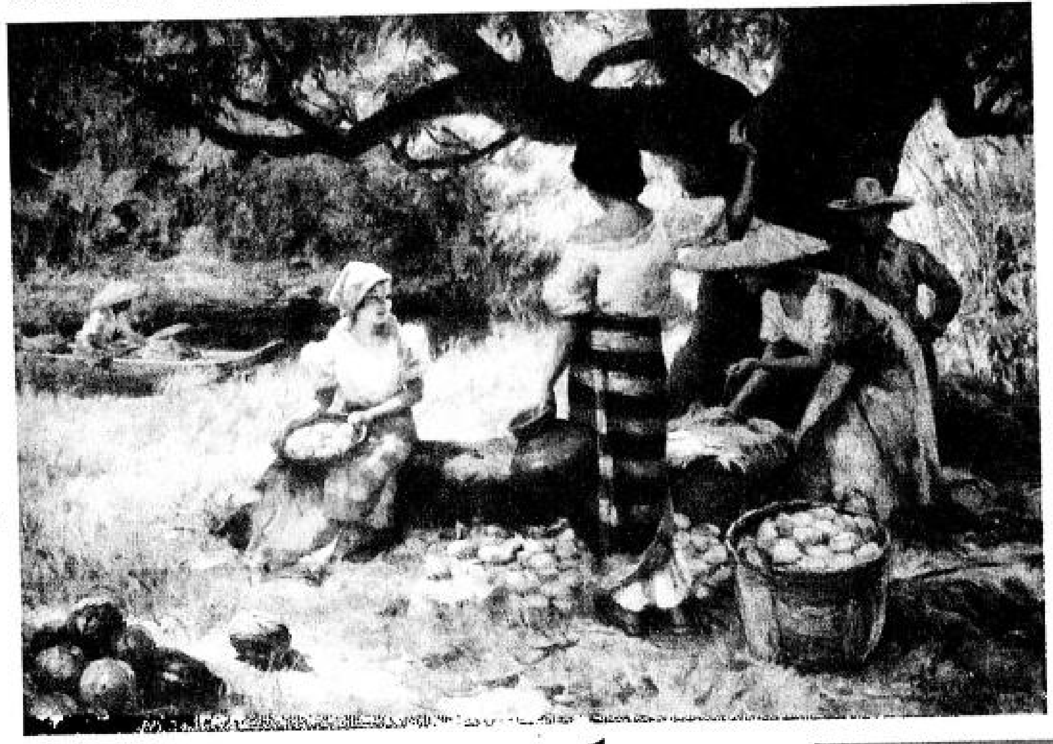
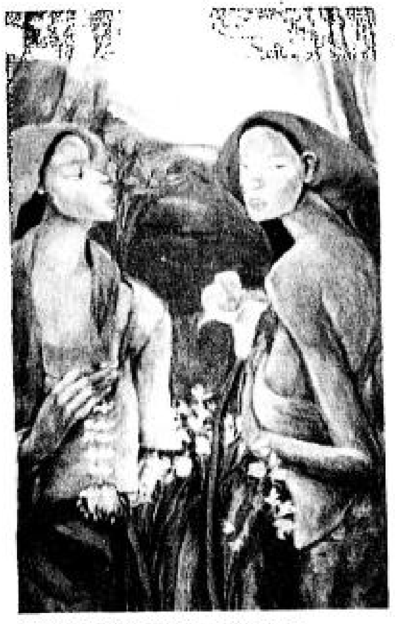


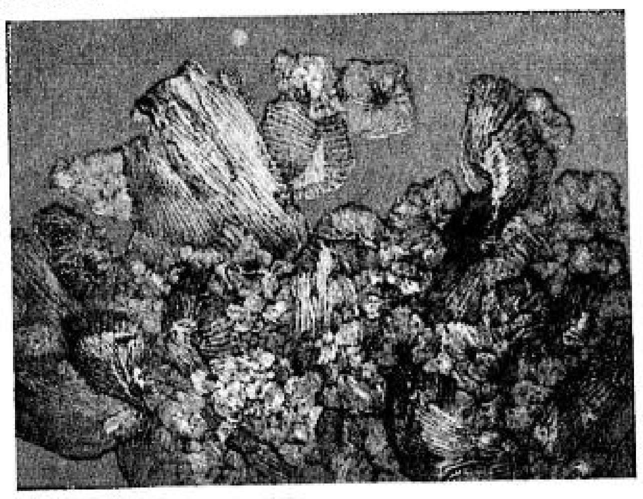
LYDIA Velasco; Fernando Amorsolo's "Under the Mango Tree" (left)



VELASCO'S "The Flower Vendors"

All 16 Filipino works were bidded out and fetched high prices. The auction house says the feat was 'incredible' and showed international demand for Filipino art is growing

Pinoy works shine in Sotheby's Easter auction



"STILL Life," by Juvenal Sanso

ALL 16 ARTWORKS by nine Filipino artists included in the recent Sotheby's auction on Southeast Asian Art in Singapore were successfully bidded out.

"It's incredible," said Mok Kim Chuan, Sotheby's Singapore-based specialist on Southeast Asian Art.

He said the 100-percent sale of Filipino works showed there was a strong international demand for Filipino art.

The 16 artworks generated S$537,240, or P17,191,000 at current exchange rates.

Fernando Amorsolo's "My Daughter in Native Dress," a 38¼" x 27¾" work in oil on canvas, which was estimated to sell at S$50,000-70,000, brought in S$174,000.

The painting ranked among the Top 10 highest-priced paintings in the Sotheby's Easter auction.

Other Amorsolo works brought in good values as well.

The 1951 "Under the Mango Tree" sold at S$96,000 (estimated at S$45,000-65,000).

"Cooking under the Mango Tree" sold at S$72,000. The 1958 work "Street Scene with Yellow Umbrella" sold at S$57,600. It had been initially estimated at S$38,000-48,000.

After the Amorsolos, the other paintings that did exceptionally well were Sanso's "Like Jade Jewels"/"The Jade Vase I," Lydia Velasco's "The Flower Vendors," Romeo Tabuena's "The Guitar Player" and E. L. Cordova's "Tropical Spring."

Sanso's two paintings, sold as one lot (Lot 72), raised S$11,400 or almost double the original estimate. This is a record price for a Sanso work on paper.

It will be recalled that Sanso's works were first introduced into the auction house in its 20th Anniversary sale of Southeast Asian paintings last October, in which the artist's 28" x 38" acrylic on canvas work sold for a record S$15,600.

Velasco's work sold at 2½ times the original estimate, also a record for a first-timer at a Sotheby's auction.

E. L. Cordova's "Tropical Spring" brought in over twice the low side estimate at S$9,600. It had been initially estimated at S$4,000-6,000.

Broader base

"What is happening is that we are able to broaden the base of art collectors," Mok said.

The Sotheby's specialist said he sees two active forces on the market.

"The first are the senior art collectors who collect the Masters, and the second are the younger collectors," he said.

"Young collectors are those who like to break away from the traditional collectors," he explained. These are young professionals who like cutting-edge artworks or even artworks that become conversation pieces. They are the reason Sotheby's has introduced its section on New Contemporary Paintings, he added.

The animated participation of bidders in Sotheby's auctions are due to the auction house's successful strategy of "offering high-quality pieces at good starting prices," said Mok.

The tack allows the market to have free play. "Ultimately, prices will go up if it is a good piece," the Sotheby's official said. *Jack Teotico*

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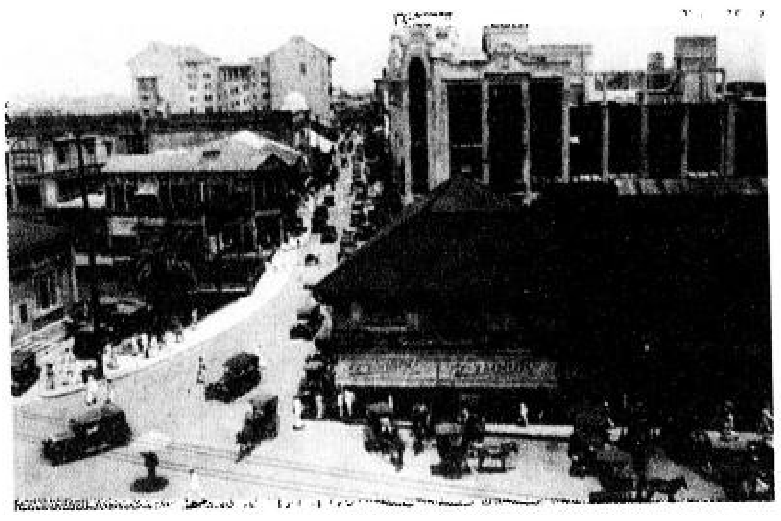


WALK along Escolta today and look for vestiges of what it looked like in 1929.

Filipino cultural greatness is there for the seeing

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

Make summer the perfect occasion to travel around Manila and the rest of the country, appreciating Filipino sights and sounds

READERS HAVE WRITTEN TO make suggestions about walking around Manila. The two letters below react to a letter from José Cruz ("Pride of Place," 4/10) that had painted a grim picture of Manila.

Ivan Mandy (www.oldmanilawalks.com), who conducts walking tours of Manila, writes: "Yes, Metro Manila is, indeed, a very frustrating place, and I'm saying this out of 28 years of living in this sprawling megalopolis.

"Having had the fortunate chance to walk around some of the world's greatest cities, Shanghai, HK, Singaporé, Barcelona, New York, Montreal, Washington, I can only sigh at how these urban spaces have maximized all their assets, creating urban masterpieces worthy of the long plane ride from Manila.

"...I haven't been to Bangkok yet but have heard that it sprawls as Metro Manila does [and has] similar problems ... But what gets seven million tourists to Bangkok? All the good marketing elements, plus the fact that the Thais promote their culture big-time.

"I've been to Marrakech and Casablanca in Morocco and they are similar to Manila... yet people still flock to their crowded souks and medinas. Again, it's the culture factor that gives it an edge. They trumpet their French Moroccan Art Deco buildings even if many are in varying degrees of dilapidation.

"... This is the reason I'm doing Manila Walks. I want to bring out Manila's unique cultural traits long buried under mismanagement, corruption, pollution, tacky architecture and a culturally apathetic populace that can't seem to find good things to say about this metropolis of ours.

"Seeing Manila is totally different from the historical and cultural aspect. There's nothing like climbing the Intramuros walls and seeing the American colonial buildings across the former moat to tell you how Manila was affected by the tide of American colonialism at the turn of the century.

"Or walking on the streets of Binondo to experience the resolute Chinese imprint in our city. Even historic burial places like the Chinese Cemetery and La Loma show architectural evolution in our city during the past 120 years.

"Really, it's not so much of trumpeting beauty in Manila as that is, indeed, difficult to see, but more of proclaiming and having Manileños... changing their perceptions and cultivating a certain cultural pride, not so much in line with 'Hey, we've got the biggest mall in Asia,' but more with realizing that we have a unique brand of culture at par with Hanoi, Bangkok or Georgetown in Malaysia."

Avid supporter

Alden Lauzon, a teacher in the Art Studies department of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, also shares his views:

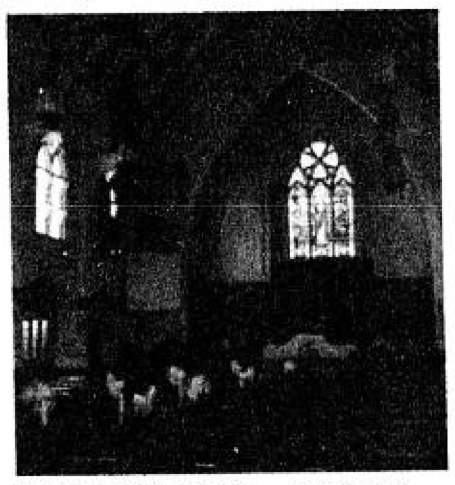
"In response to Mr. Cruz's article... I say that I do not share his rather harsh conclusions. Yes, Manila is dirty, but it does not deserve total condemnation... I am an avid supporter of Manila.

"I disagree with Mr. Cruz because I judge a place not by its totality to the point that it overwhelms you, and thus for me it doesn't have any more surprises to show. I like a place that slowly reveals itself, where you find gems like an Art Deco building hidden amidst the Carriedo squalor or, cafés and art galleries housed in Intramuros or Malate structures.

"... I wrote this letter to alert Mr. Cruz and others that, despite the negative image Manila has, this is somehow negated by 'streetwalking discoveries.'

"As an Art Studies professor in UP Diliman, I have been doing a Manila Tour with my students. It starts in San Sebastian Church to let them see first-hand a Gothic church. Then it proceeds to Quiapo for them to observe folk Catholicism, followed by a walk to Carriedo and all the way to Ongpin to experience Chinatown culture.

"Then I direct them to Escolta to look for the pre-war Capitol Theater and also Calvo Building, where old Escolta pictures hang. From there they ride a jeep to the National Museum, and afterward walk to Intramuros to explore San Agustin Church, Casa Manila, Manila Cathedral and Fort Santiago.



THE ELLINWOOD Memorial Church, an unknown treasure tucked away in one of the last tree-lined streets in Malate

"The fruit of this tour is a reflection paper that shows the student's genuine appreciation of the city.

"One of the more heartening comments came from a Korean student who promised to accompany his visiting parents to Intramuros. Another one wrote that she never knew Manila could be an exciting place to explore, contrary to the negative images it has acquired through the years.

"Another comment that struck me, which is akin to what you wrote about 'developing pride of place,' is that she can proudly say to foreigners especially after seeing San Agustin Church, Intramuros, '*Bakit may* Manila *ba kayo*?' (Do you also have a Manila?)

"Of course, these reactions are coupled with expressions of regret since most structures they saw have been neglected. Thus, the imperativeness of heritage conservation in the redevelopment of our cities.

"We Filipinos should start exploring our own places, whether in Manila or the provinces. I believe that tourism fosters nationalism or, if that's a strong word, love for country. This will be an antidote to those who see nothing but ugliness in our country."

Touring around Manila and the rest of the Philippines is the best way for me to reaffirm my belief that our country is among the most beautiful in the world, and that in its rural areas, towns and cities are found the people and heritage that prove the greatness of our nation.

Make this summer the time to discover our country and its greatness.

Feedback is welcome at afvillalon@hotmail.com

UST hosts international course on cultural conservation

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS, through its Center for the Conservation of Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropics (CCCPET), will host Collections Asia or Collasia 2010, an international course on Conserving Collections in Southeast Asia in Storage, on May 8-31 at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex, UST campus, España, Manila.

The course is held together with the International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (Iccrom), Southeast Asian Minister of Education Organization Regional Center for Archaeology and Fine Arts (Seameo-Spafa), and National Museum of the Philippines.

Collasia 2010, which coincides with the National Heritage Month celebration, is the first in the Philippines. It seeks to achieve prevention rather than mere intervention in protecting collections, which are part of Southeast Asia's patrimony, through the study of threats to collections in storage, conceptual and practical tools, storage materials and techniques.

The course also tackles problem-solving approaches to the protection of cultural patrimony in Southeast Asia.

This three-week international course will gather 21 Southeast Asian delegates to be facilitated by 15 world-class specialists in the protection and conservation of movable heritage as organizers and lecturers:

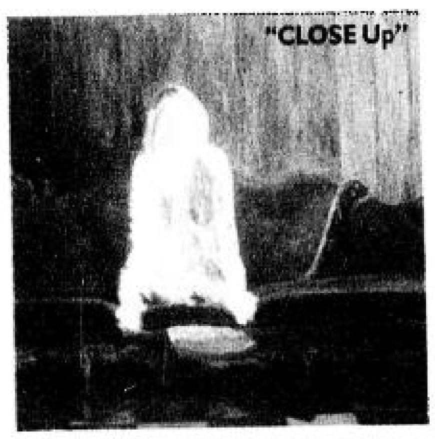
Katriina Simila, project manager, Iccrom, Italy; José Luiz Junior Pedersoli, research scientist, Iccrom, Italy; Farideh Fekrsanati, conservator for preventive conservation, National Museum of Ethnology, The Netherlands; Graeme Scott, head of collections management, National Museum of Ethnology, The Netherlands; Ita Yulita, conservator, Museum Nasional, Indonesia; Vinod Daniel, head of collections and resources, AusHeritage, Australia; Kevin Kettle, project development officer, Spafa, Thailand; Paula Valenzuela, conservator, National Center for Conservation and Restoration, Chile; Fernanda Kangiser Gomez, conservator, National Center for Conservation and Restoration, Chile; Aurora Arby, anthropologist, Center for the Research and Development of Culture, Indonesia; Kamal Jain, dean and head, Department of Conservation of the National Museum Institute, India; Peter Siman, museum assistant, Sarawak Museum, Malaysia; Ana Maria Theresa Labrador, curator, Jorge B. Vargas Museum, Philippines; Angel Bautista, museum researcher, National Museum of the Philippines; and architect Clarissa Avendaño, assistant director, UST Museum of Arts and Sciences.

Collasia 2010 is a seven-year program by Iccrom and Spafa to improve the conditions of the cultural collections of Southeast Asian countries Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The project has been made possible in the Philippines through the collaboration of the National Historical Institute, UP Jorge B. Vargas Museum, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, International Rice Research Institute and Getty Foundation.

Participation of heritage professionals in Collasia 2010 is invitational.

VISUAL ARTS



"CLOSE Up"

Sison at Mag:Net

Mag:Net Gallery Paseo presents Yasmin Sison's recent works in oil in "Unmade." The exhibit shows Sison's continuing incursion into the enigmatic interiority of her mutable realities mediated through found pages of fashion magazines. The show opens tomorrow at 6 p.m. and will be on view until May 27. Mag:Net Gallery is on the G/F of Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas and Sedeno St., Makati. Call 8177895 or e-mail magnetplus@gmail.com.

Hidalgo at Pasig Museum

Amado "Ding" Hidalgo is holding an exhibit with some 14 members of the Fairview Artists Group, May 5-12, at Pasig Art Museum. He is also holding consultations on art acquisition and art investment. Call 9614423/9753773.

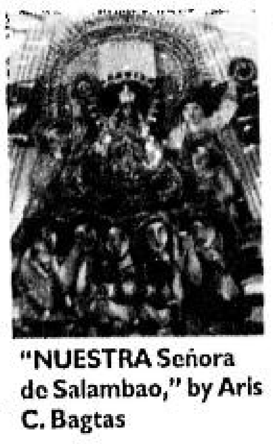
AMADO Hidalgo

FARO de la Isla de la Cabra, Mindoro

Photo exhibit on Spanish colonial lighthouses

The Ayala Museum, National Commission for Culture and Arts, and Filipino Heritage Festival Inc. will open "Parola: Colonial Lighthouses in the Philippines," an exhibit of photographs featuring Spanish colonial lighthouses in the country, on May 18 on the 4/F, Gallery Wing of Ayala Museum. The photographs were taken by Manuel Maximo Lopez del Castillo Noche, architecture historian and professor at University of Santo Tomas. Noche himself will lecture on May 18, 2 p.m. The exhibit runs until June 18. Call 7577117/21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.com.

Traveling exhibit at Boston



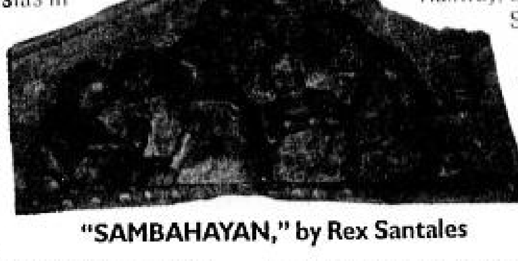
"NUESTRA Señora de Salambao," by Aris C. Bagtas

Artists Raphael Cusi, Noel Catacutan, Ernesto "Aris" Bagtas, Giovanni de la Rosa, Jorge Banawa, Maria Consuelo "Konn" Salao and Rene Robles hold until June a traveling exhibit for Philippine Independence Day celebrations in Rome, London, Milan, Luxembourg, Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Dresden. The exhibit, "Colors of Freedom," showcases the beauty of the Philippines. A predeparture exhibit is running until May 10 in Boston Art Gallery. Call 7229205.

French artist Amani A. Bari-Pourcines is holding the exhibit "Beauty and Resilience of the Filipino" until May 19 on 2/F, MuseumSpace, Ayala Museum. The exhibit features portraits of different Filipinos from all walks of life. Call 7577117/21 local 31.

Various artists at De las Islas

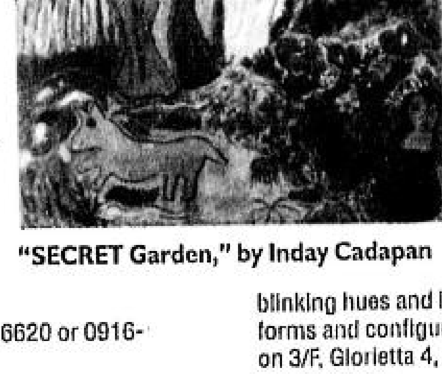
Galeria de las Islas in Intramuros presents "Sining at Kultura," featuring selected works in various media depicting the traditions and heritage of the Filipino. Featured works include sculpture, drawings, oil paintings and prints by Antonio Doctor Garcia, Frank Gajo, José Lozano, Rex Santales and Crisanto Lodronio. Call 5272113.



"SAMBAHAYAN," by Rex Santales

Bulacan artists

Twenty-Twenty Gallery and Art Center (109 Binyang, Bocaue, Bulacan) presents "Erensiya," a Bulacan heritage art exhibit featuring Joel "Welbart" Bartolome, Eugene Dawag and Rex Tatlonghari, May 9-30. Call 6926620 or 0916-4442534.



"SECRET Garden," by Inday Cadapan

Art workshop

The Positivism art workshop by E.R. Tagle will run May 13-June 3. The workshop will be held at MCS Complex (formerly Makati Cinema Square), Jollibee Function Room, Chino Roces Avenue, Makati. Call 8112432 or 0927-5522288.

Mother's Day exhibit

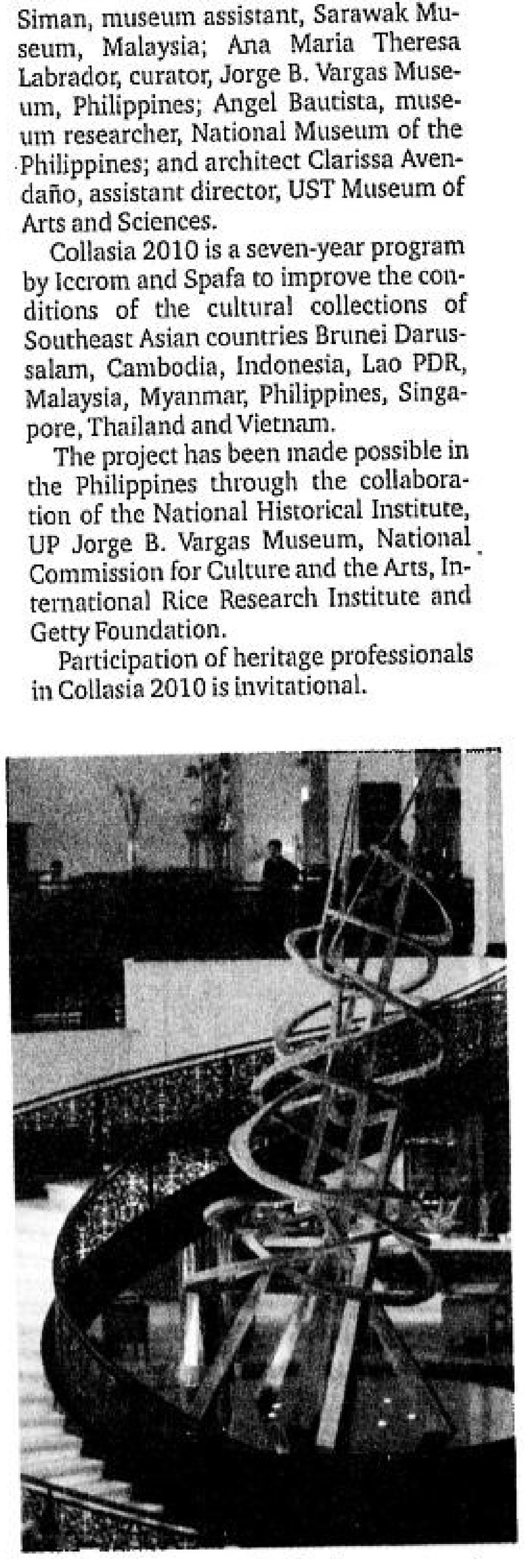
Shangri-La Plaza pays tribute to mothers with an art exhibit, "Expressions of a Mother's Love," which features Mother-and-Child art pieces at the Shaw Hallway, Level 4 of The Shang.

Participating artists are Malang, Norma Belleza, Angelito Antonio, Adrian Morales, Romeo Rosete, William Cadag and Hermes Allegre.

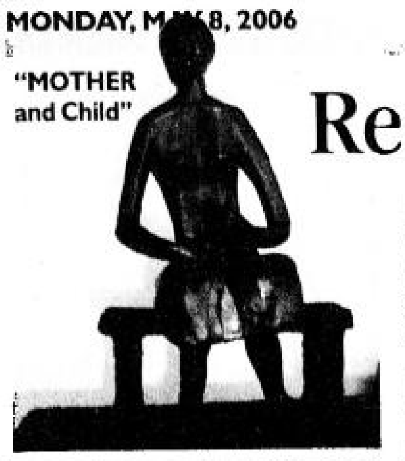
Art retailers participating in the exhibit include Artistree, Art Circle, Asia Art Gallery, the Gallery by Arts of Asia, Gallery 828, Arts Venue, Century and Circa. Call 6337851 to 70.

Inday Cadapan at 139

Gallery 139 presents "Inday's Secret Garden," an exhibit of works by Inday Cadapan, until May 17. Cadapan's paintings are redolent with brilliant, unblinking hues and images in striking forms and configurations. Gallery 139 is on 3/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 7289724.



"RHYTHMIC FORM" is the latest artwork created by Eduardo Castrillo for the Spiral Restaurant of the Philippine Plaza Hotel. Inspired by the concepts of life and growth, and futuristic in style, the towering 7-meter high welded brass artwork swirls forcefully upward, relating to the immediate environment. Castrillo, who is celebrating his 40th year anniversary on the Philippine contemporary art scene, says the new work embodies his progressive creativity surging forward and upward, from the past to the moving present thrusting to the future.


"MOTHER and Child"

Recycled art

From page C4

minder of the Middle Eastern culture Realuyo has clearly imbibed in his long stint working in various sites of the region.

These pieces, less than a foot in height, are mounted on pedestals, tall enough to give the rather small works a sense of scale and height. They have also been lacquered, giving them sheen and luster, which somehow detracts from the desired textural effects.

The artist works best when exploring the milieu of children, capturing innocence with a dose of good humor and wit.

In the case of the paintings, all executed in mixed media, Realuyo shows his advertising savvy in his composition, which happens to be his strongest suite.

The works, on a thematic note, may relate to his personal journey, the dream motif presented as a recurring device.

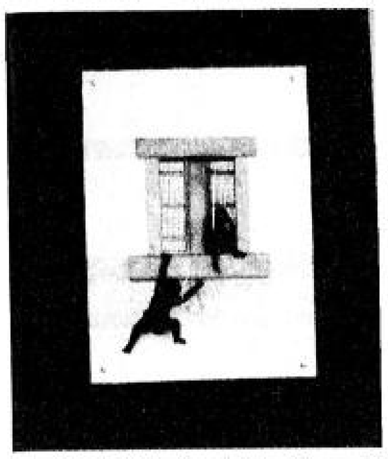
Particularly amusing is his "Window Series: To the Rescue," with two children by the window, one seated precariously, the other barely holding on to dear life. Combining painting and sculpture, this piece shows the artist's skills in both media.

Realuyo also has several works showing doors and façades of buildings in the Middle East, commentaries on the changing landscape in the cities he has lived in. These works have ample space in their borders, but are jazzed up with undulating textural effects from pulp and recycled paper.

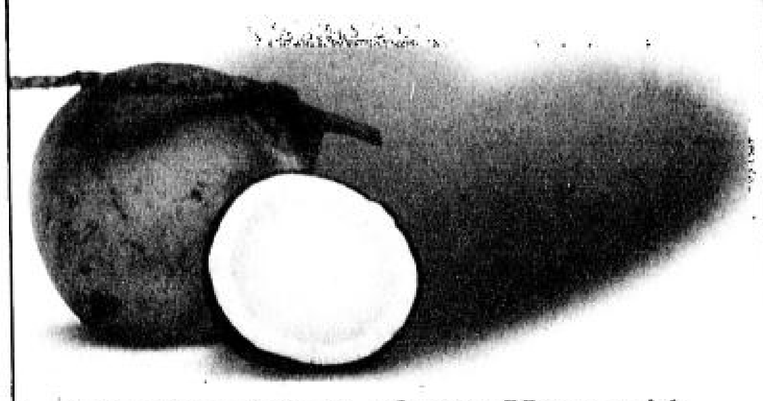
The show marks the first time Realuyo has publicly exhibited his oeuvre.

It is admittedly still far from polished, but the sense of craft is most evident in the use of materials. His artistic innovation shows in his tapping the untold wonders of recycling.

E-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com


"WINDOW Series: To the Rescue"

RIBBON-CUTTING ceremonies with guests



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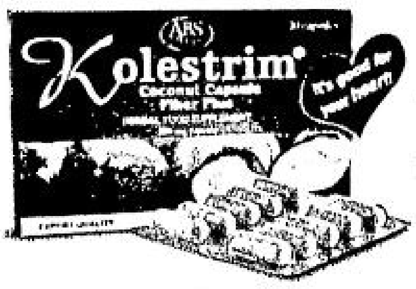

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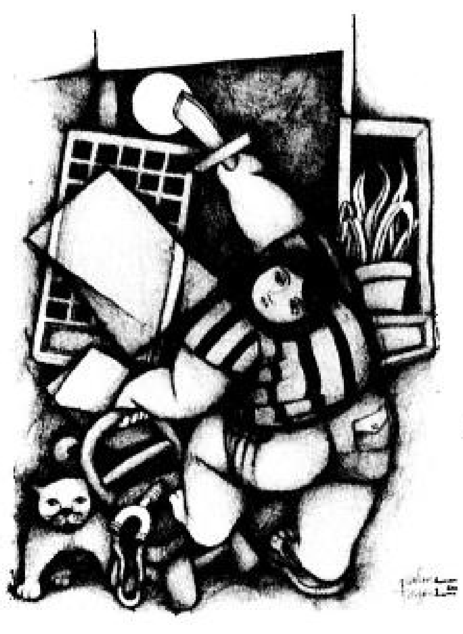
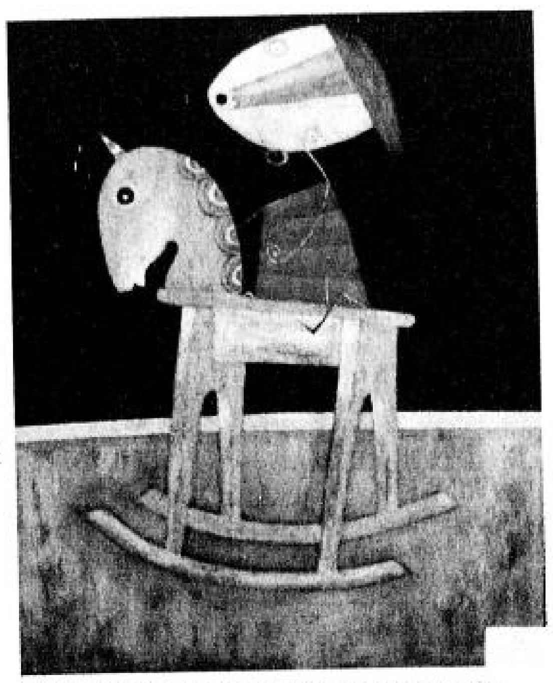
Farley del Rosario and Palma Tayona at Choice Expression


"SUNTOK sa Buwan," by Palma Tayona

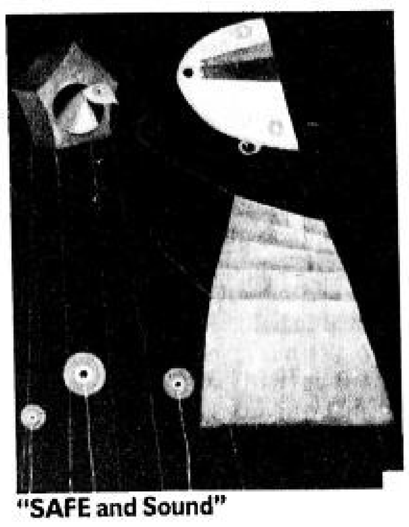

"JUST the Two of Us," by Farley del Rosario

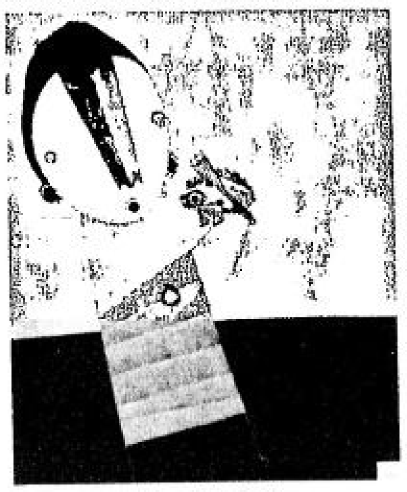
FARLEY DEL ROSARIO AND PALMA Tayona present a collection of oil-on-canvas and pen-and-ink-on-paper works in "To Each His Own," a sampler of their upcoming solo exhibits, on view at Choice Expression Gallery, 2/F, Doña Consolacion Bldg., 122 Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati.

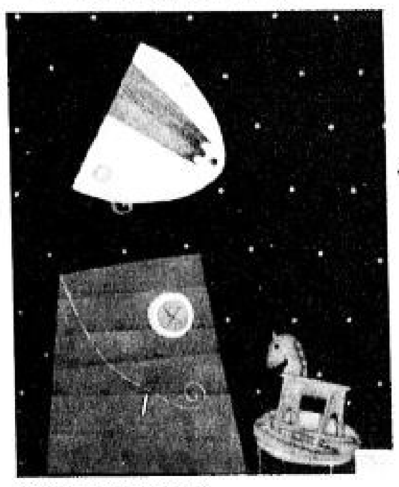
Farley shows once more his verve with colors in a new series of adorable characters with curlicued extremities, but this time with darker yet relaxing tones as backdrops. His sold-out series in January shows he has consolidated his niche in the art scene.

Tayona uses pen and ink for his signature Botero-inspired images. The black-and-white series shows his expressionist stamp, portraying nostalgia and filial bonding.

Call 8990717 and 8990718.


"SAFE and Sound"


"THE SOUND of Luck"


"STARRY Night"

Recycled art

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

SINCE HE WAS A PRECOCIOUS CHILD growing in Oas, Albay, Ramon Rojo Realuyo has had an affinity with materials derived from nature: stone, wood and pulp from old paper.

Of the three, it is pulp, produced from old discarded paper and paper-based products, that remains his favorite medium for painting. He also prefers pulp for his sculptures since, once manipulated by hand and brush, it is made to resemble bronze and granite.

In his just-ended first solo exhibit, "Pulp Dreams: The Art of Ramon Rojo Realuyo," in Renaissance Gallery, 4/L, SM Megamall, the artist mounted his paintings and sculptures, majority of which were executed in Saudi Arabia and parts of the Middle East, where the 47-year-old artist has worked as art director for an advertising agency since 1990.

Realuyo has previously worked in Qatar and Bahrain. He has helped organize group shows for his compatriots. He has raised money for children with various disabilities in Jeddah, and, with his wife, founded Artquake, which helps Filipino artists advance in their career. To date, the group has helped over 100 aspiring artists.

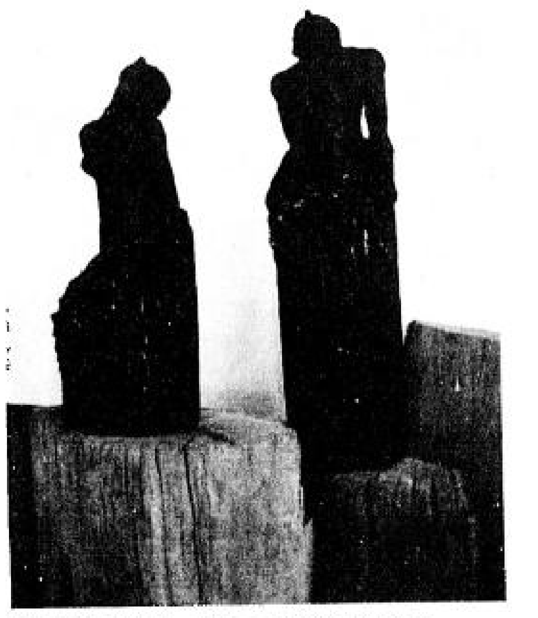
His show has two suites: paintings and sculptures. Typical of any artist mounting his first-ever show, Realuyo's works do not adhere to any theme or subject matter. In a freewheeling manner, he simply allows his muses to take over wherever his dreams and fantasies may take him to.

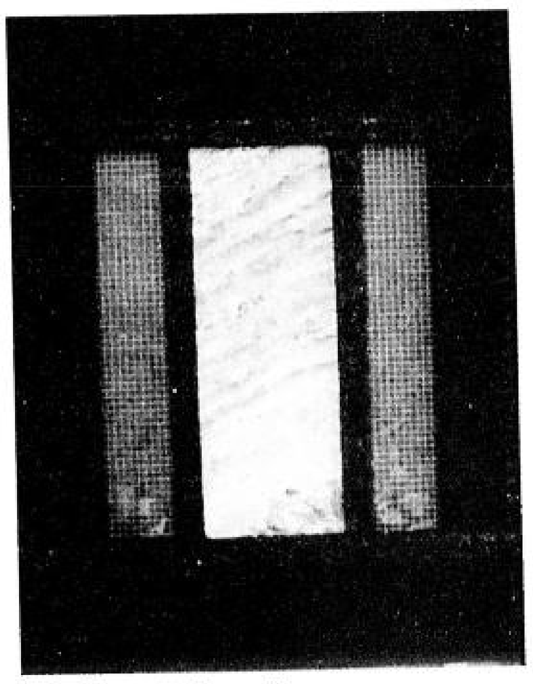
Most of his pieces, however, have a feel-good message to them, perhaps indicative of the artist's childlike faith in the innate goodness of life.

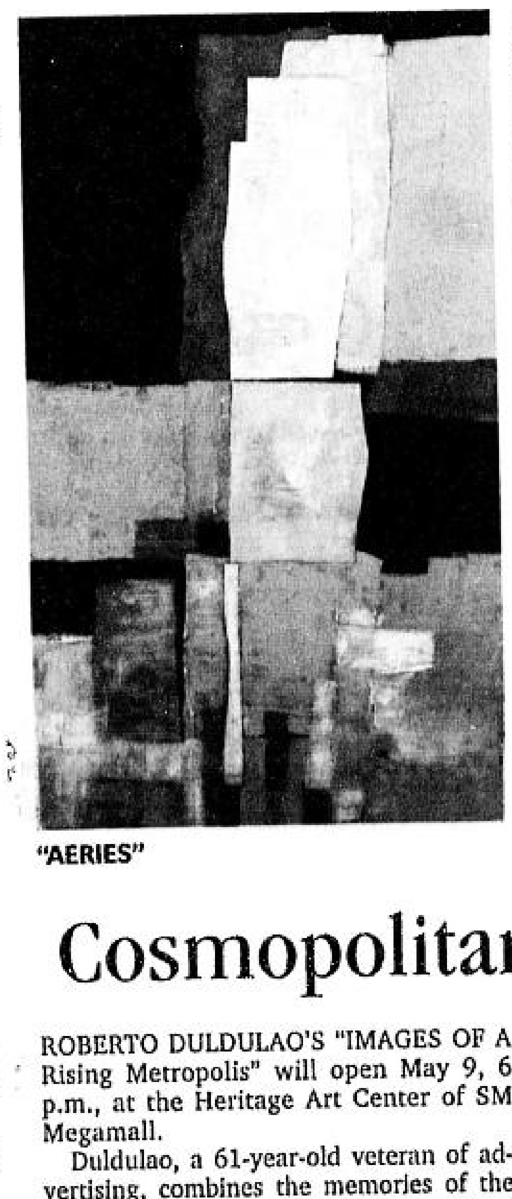
The sculptures have a solitary figure or, at the most, two characters, aloft on a pedestal, coincidentally also made from recycled materials. There is a Mother and Child figure done in clay, a child holding a kite that is unable to fly, a bound woman figure, a version of Malakas and Maganda.

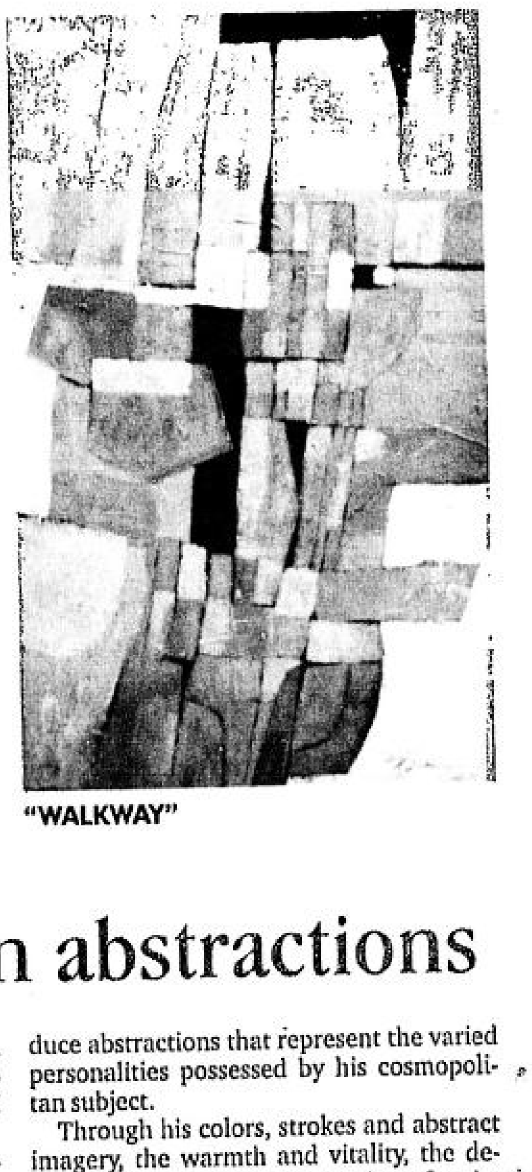
There is also a Bedouin character, a re-

RECYCLED/ C3


"SI MALAKAS at Maganda" (pulp and recycled paper)


"AQUATIQUE dreams"


"AERIES"


"WALKWAY"

Cosmopolitan abstractions

ROBERTO DULDULAO'S "IMAGES OF A Rising Metropolis" will open May 9, 6 p.m., at the Heritage Art Center of SM Megamall.

Duldulao, a 61-year-old veteran of advertising, combines the memories of the city of his youth, the utopic metropolis of his dreams, and the burgeoning landscape of the city that greets him every day to produce abstractions that represent the varied personalities possessed by his cosmopolitan subject.

Through his colors, strokes and abstract imagery, the warmth and vitality, the detached majesty, and raw emotion of a city in action becomes even more vivid to the beholder of his art.

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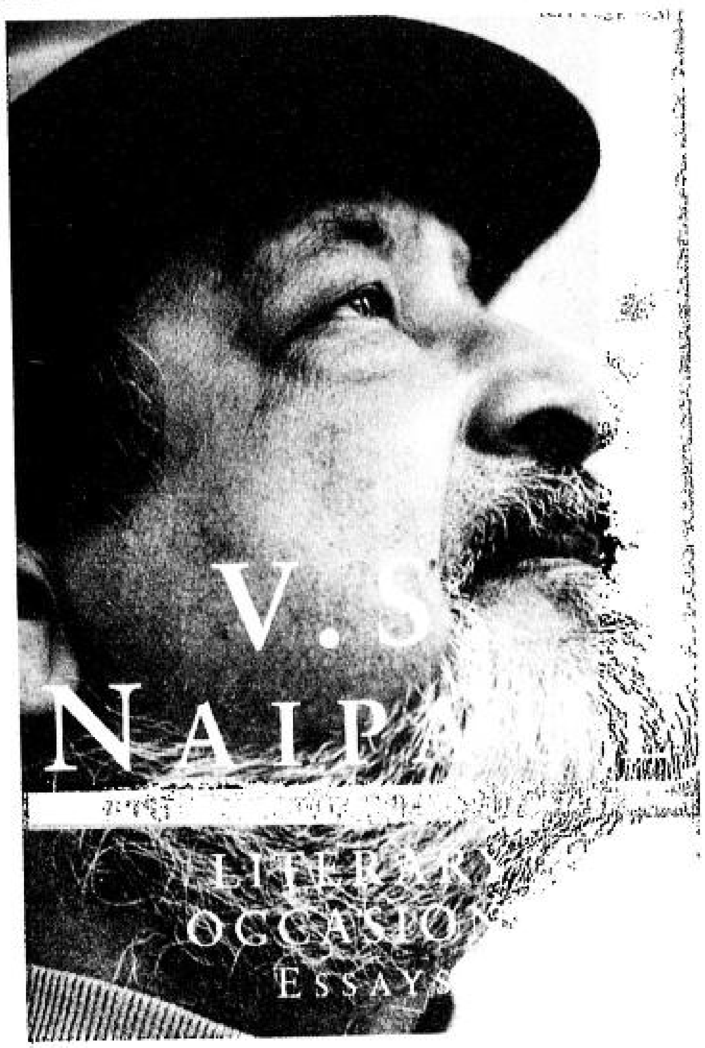
V.S. Naipaul takes the aspiring writer on a tour of the secret civilization that is his body of works



By Ruel S. De Vera

"Literary Occasions: Essays"
By V.S. Naipaul
Picador, London—
2004, 202 pages

DIFFERENT DREAMS PROPEL different lives. Sometimes it is chosen early; sometimes it is chosen for them.

For V.S. Naipaul, fictionist and essayist, winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature, it is both—and something more.

The Trinidad-born Naipaul, with his expertise in diverse forms and his mixed heritage, exemplifies the mystery of modern writing.

An accomplished novelist, Naipaul achieves an almost transcendental plane of significance as an essayist, particularly in his own exploration of his identity as a writer. That is the gift to be found in "Literary Occasions: Essays," the collection that gathers 11 of his long essays for the first time.

Among the pieces are the awe-inspiring "Prologue: Reading and Writing, a Personal Account," introductions and his Nobel lecture, "Two Worlds." The book serves as a showcase for Naipaul's powerful prose, distilling into precise sentences the Nobel laureate's thoughts.

To serve the purpose of maintaining the unabridged nature of these pieces, there is much overlapping in the essays' subjects, particularly on Naipaul's childhood. Just as there are overlaps within the essays, readers will soon discover that there is an overlapping as well between the truncated ambitions of the writer's father, Seepersad Naipaul, and of the author's writerly persuasions.

"To be a writer as O. Henry was, to die in mid-sentence, was to triumph over darkness," he writes in one piece. "And like a wild religious faith that hardens in adversity, this wish to be a writer, this refusal to be extinguished, this wish to seek at some future time for justice, strengthened as our conditions grew worse in the house on the street."

Most of all, Naipaul writes about his own dramatic, tortured odyssey to writing in a time of typewriters and drinking buddies, of the role of family and fate in his journey. He was, after all,

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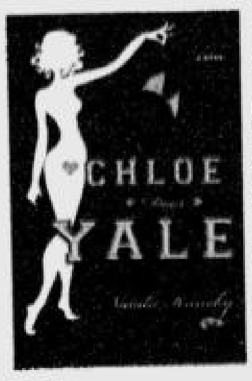
Congratulations to Donille Lou Valmonte, Bb. Pilipinas International & Rosalyn Sirikit Santiago, 1st Runner-up Bb. Pilipinas 2006.

Reading list



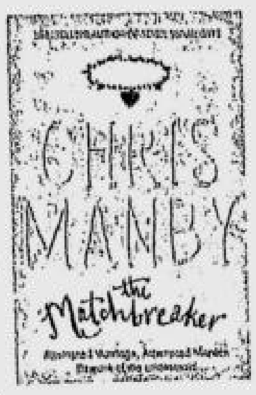
'Chloe Does Yale'

By Natalie Krinsky

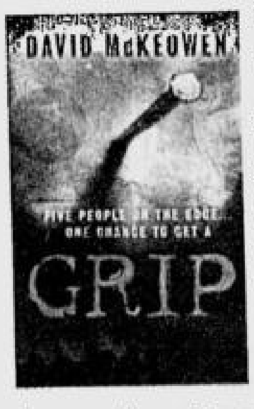
Chloe Carrington is a typical Yale student, except that along with her coursework she writes the sex column for the campus newspaper. This puts her love life under intense scrutiny. She's hoping to hook up with the right guy—but that proves even more difficult than participating in many notorious Yale traditions, such as drinking dollar drafts at Toad's, struggling through financial markets, and attending Exotic Erotic, the most entertaining party on campus.

'The Matchbreaker'

By Chris Manby



When Lindsey Parker's father announces that he will remarry, Lindsey does what any good daughter would do: wishes him congratulations, then sets about trying to kill his fiancée. Fortunately, her botched attempt at bumping Karen off fails, but it succeeds in driving Karen away. When she realizes that her father is genuinely brokenhearted, she seeks to bring Karen back. But Karen has a new man. Her mission: to seduce her ex-future stepmother's boyfriend. Her problem: She's falling in love with him.



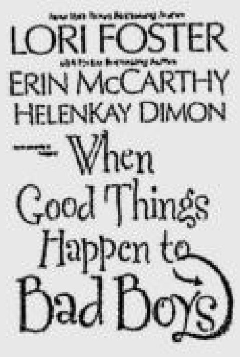
'Grip'

By David McKeowen

James Carroll only meant to do one deal to get to film school. But it went wrong. Now he owes £30,000 to drug dealer Roger Oates. Just a year away from retiring to his dream home in Honolulu, Roger knows this is no time to let things slip. So if James can't pay, his parents must. But Francis Carroll has put everything he has into a project that will finally bring him the success he craves. He simply cannot afford to help his son. And it's no good asking his new ambitious wife Rachel. She wants a baby—while his dangerously sexy first wife wants him back. Everyone wants to keep a grip: on their money and their jobs. On their dreams. But something's got to give.

'When Good Things Happen to Bad Boys'

By Lori Foster, Erin McCarthy and Helenkay Dimon



Three of today's hottest romance authors team up for a trio of sinfully sexy stories where good things come in deliciously bad-boy packages. In Lori Foster's "Playing Doctor," Axel Dean's motto is "attitude makes a huge difference in bed," and after he meets Libby Preston, he can't bear to think of playing doctor with anyone else. In "The Lady of the Lake" by Erin McCarthy, Dylan Diaz learns that "Can I make mad, passionate love to you?" is not the first thing you say after rescuing Violet Caruthers from drowning. Finally in Helenkay Dimon's "Hardhats and Silk Stockings," Whit Thomas has met the most infuriating and sexiest woman architect that is Hannah Bridges.

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Bangk
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Travel promo

Get a free travel document case when you purchase any Time Out travel guide series in participating National Book Store branches (Bestsellers-The Podium, Filinvest, Glorietta, Greenbelt, Quezon Avenue, Shangri-la Plaza, SM Baguio, SM Megamall, SM North Edsa, SM Pampanga, Superbranch-Cubao).

Also get a chance to win a weekend stay for two at Shangri-La Mactan Cebu with complimentary service at the Chi Spa or at the Discovery Suites Tagaytay.

Promo period is until May 15.

All Time Out Guides are written by a team of local experts, with unique insider perspective.

They contain comprehensive arts and cultural coverage, along with hundreds of independent reviews. For destination, Time Out critics identify the best, the worst, the most fashionable and the most overrated.

The "Time Out Guides" series has grown from the huge success of Time Out Magazine.

Tony Elliot started the magazine in 1968 with a 21st birthday present of £75 given to him by his aunt. Today, Tony still heads up an independent group that publishes over 90 titles, has offices in New York and Paris and licenses for Time Out Magazines in 12 territories across the globe.

Available at selected National Book Store branches.

Mr. & Ms. honors moms in May issue

MR. & MS., THE "SUPER-monthly of the body, mind, and spirit," pays tribute to mothers in its May issue.

Learn tips on how to cope with child-rearing problems by using the mind in the article, "Psychic Parenting."

Find out what celebrity moms say about their kids. Singer Elizabeth Ramsey has this to say about her role in her kids' love affairs: "I let them be. *Hindi naman ako ang makikisama sa kanila.* (I am not the one who will deal with them anyway)."

Mr. & Ms. also offers gift ideas for Mother's Day, such as those that combine flower arrangements with chocolates and other lovely trinkets.

Mr.&Ms.
Gifts for Mom
Mother Dearest
ALBERT & LIEZL MARTINEZ
WOLVERINE

The article "Angels and Ghosts" tells the story of a person's encounters with her dead mother.

Mr. & Ms. continues the paranormal slant with Jaime T. Licauco's article on the difference between demonic possession and insanity.

On the other hand, writer Nita Umali-Berthelsen shares her thoughts on the "Omens of Death."

Other features: psychic Frances Gloria's "Sexual Violence in Past Lives"; Mariel Francisco's thoughts on good and bad according Don Miguel Ruiz's "The Four Agreements"; and how astrology directs a person to the perfect career.

In connection with career guidance, there's a list of top schools and universities in the metropolis.

Hollywood actor Hugh Jackman, who is reprising his Wolverine role in the newest installment of the "X-Men" movie series, is featured on the gatefold cover.

Columnist Jamal Ashley Abbas dissects the George Clooney-directed film, "Good Night and Goodbye," citing the movie's relevance to questions of press freedom.

Other important features: a heart doctor's prescriptions on mending a broken heart, the earth's dwindling water supply, and how stopping smoking can improve the skin.

Celebrity couple Albert and Liezl Martinez relate the secret to a lasting marriage: "You must find time for each other," Albert says.

Mr. & Ms. is moving to a better office at SPVI Bldg, 2251 Don Chino Roces Ave., Makati.

A lesson on travel as well as writing

By Constantino C. Tejero

AMADÍS MA. GUERRERO IS, foremost, a literary writer, one of our most underrated literary writers. His "Miss Lily and the Policeman" and "Children of the City" should be by now classics of the Philippine short story.

Having published his valedictory collection of short stories a decade ago, he is known to common readers as an arts reporter and travel writer. It's just as well, because in his journalistic pieces Guerrero also excels.

As culture writer, he displays such wide and varied interests and a sureness of touch in handling these subjects that only a few Filipino writers can claim to possess (we think of someone like Doreen Fernandez, or National Artist Nick Joaquin). This is borne out by his innumerable essays and reviews of art, books, films, theater, music, even dance.

His journalistic writing is characterized by clean straightforward prose, a relaxed tone, and uncomplicated syntax. Surprising for a first-rate literary mind, there are no literary flourishes, no heightened language here. In other words, it is writing that's not trying-hard.

Style is personality—and nowhere is this truer than in this case. The fineness and restraint of Guerrero's writing is only reflective of the quiet and unassuming person that he is, a true descendant of the *ilustrados* of Malate.

But then we remember him always writing this way, even in his literary pieces. It has always been writing that's not strained, the clarity of his ideas couched in language that is simple.

Nowhere is this more manifest than in his travel writing. Here, aware of the poetry inherent in the landscape, he wisely plays down the poeticism and produces prose that is stripped bare. It is writing that seems artless, that sounds effortless, therefore, lucid and graceful.

Listen to this line, for example: "You can hear the sounds, the humming, almost a moan, of the coalesced wind." It is almost Racinean.

Total wellbeing

Guerrero's writing is a proofreader's delight. As one can see, he is anal retentive even to the last punctuation mark.

In a way, his books of travel writing become a lesson on travel as well as writing. His latest, "The Archipelago Sanctuaries," sixth in the series, is a testament to that.

At 122 pages comprising 32 brief articles, it is just as slim as the previous ones, and it has the same format, with black-and-white photos and a color folio in the middle mostly taken by the author during his trips.

Again he zeroes in on the familiar spots, such as Subic, Tagaytay, Pagsanjan, Anilao, Lucban, Puerto Galera, Coron, Angono, El Nido, Puerto Princesa, Mactan. But he also treads on quaint and exotic grounds, such as Maragondon, Majayjay, Marawi.

More importantly, he explores the unexplored, such as Orani, Bataan, a protected area and endangered zone; the *pawikan* sanctuary on Tayabas Bay; the island sanctuary of Tablas; the secret peninsula of Caramoan; the island gem that is Badian.

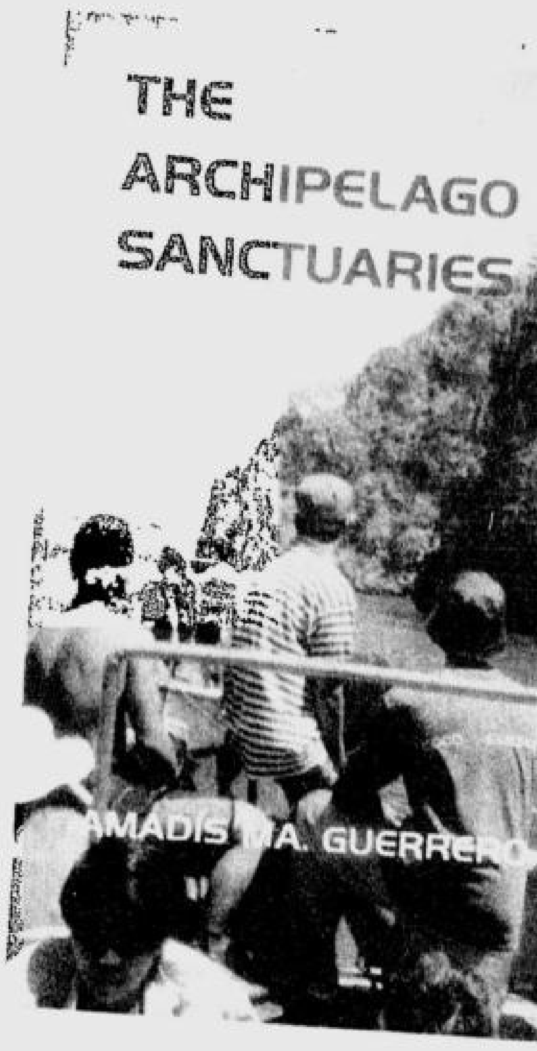
Because here Guerrero is focusing not just on famous landmarks and plush resorts but also on the Philippines' protected areas and endangered sanctuaries. Here he is actually advocating ecotourism and covering ecodestinations like rainforest groves, turtle hatcheries, pine-tree havens.

But it's not only for the environment, because the author is also offering a guide for the tourist's total wellbeing. There's an article on the growing trend of health resorts, with a list of tropical spas and detox retreats.

Also unusual for a travel book, it includes the cultural heritage of the places the author visits, often on equal footing with the landscapes and local cuisine.

A natural gem

Told by his publisher that travel books didn't sell well these days, Guerrero raised money to publish it himself. He should have pitched it as something else, because it actually goes beyond travel writing.



The one before this, "A Stun of Islands," has foreshadowed it with bits of advocacy writing on ecotourism. That one, aptly taking its title from Carlos Angeles' poem "A Stun of Jewels," also records in text and photos the natural gem that is the Philippine Islands—before the encroachment of urban development, industrialization and "progress" will have completely taken over.

It is also a slim volume at 132 pages with 33 brief articles, but it virtually covers the whole archipelago through the main islands of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao, from northern to southern tips, from western to eastern fringes, from the major urban areas to the more exotic locales.

While many tourists boast of their trips abroad, this traveler has chosen to explore the far-flung islands of his native land. In this Guerrero demonstrates his nationalism, an exemplary trait associated with his forebears.

These books' value then is not just in their comprehensive information but more so in the writing. Sooner or later the data they contain may become dated or obsolete, but the reader can still enjoy the prose.

Airfare and hotel rates change in a matter of months, the landscape may even change, but some things endure: the culture of the locals, their foods, arts and crafts, their traits and customs—and any written testament of them, if it is any good.

These are, indeed, unusual little books. Where else can you find a travel book that quotes Gerard Manley Hopkins? Writing about the rainforest of Majayjay, the author observes thus: "And for all this, nature is never spent./There lives the dearest freshness deep down things."

Nobel laureate's special 'Occasions'

From page D1

seemingly prophesized in this path. "It was now less a true ambition than a form of self-esteem, a dream of release, an idea of nobility," he explains. "My life, and the life of our section of our extended family, had always been unsettled."

Intricate relationships

Indeed, what begins then as a deep reflection on Naipaul's origins as a writer becomes a study of the improbably intricate relationships of his past.

"Occasions" follows Naipaul as he endures being poor and yet proud in Port of Spain, then studying in Oxford, writing in London and finally returning to Trinidad, all the while retracing the complicated history of his family from its Indian origins to its current, far-flung branches.

The work is a magnificently heartfelt reflection on Naipaul's father Seepersad, who tortuously faced down his perceived failure as a writer and also had to overcome misfortune, poverty and even madness: "That was his subsidiary gift to me. That fear became mine as well. It was linked with the idea of the vocation: The fear could be combated only by the exercise of the vocation."

In "Occasions," Naipaul also reflects on such writers as R.K. Narayan and Joseph Conrad, situating his craft and those of others either from or on India, for example, in the greater scheme of ink.

His, after all, is a life that was constructed around the idea of becoming a writer, much as his father was told he was to become a pundit.

In Naipaul's rise one sees the validity of the act of writing. It is not a knighthood, a prize or a fellowship. Neither is it a mock turtleneck sweater, an affected accent or, horrors of horrors, a beret.

"Literature, like all living art, is always on the move," V.S. Naipaul reflects. "It is part of its life that its dominant form should constantly change. No literary form—the Shakespearean play, the epic poem, the Restoration comedy, the essay, the work of history—can continue for very long at the same pitch of inspiration. If every creative talent is always burning itself out, every literary form is always getting to the end of what it can do."

Naipaul celebrates the dynamism of following your gut—or your bloodline. "I never had a plan. I followed no system. I worked intuitively." That intuitive approach is at the heart of Naipaul's remarkable life as a writer, a dramatic true story told magnificently by the author and protagonist in "Literary Occasions."

Available in paperback from Fully Booked

Auditions at Tanghalang Pilipino

THE ACTORS' Company men in "Ang Romansa ni Magno Rubio"

TANGHALANG PILIPINO IS NOW accepting applicants for its Actors' Company for the 20th theater season. Auditions will be on May 13-20, 4-8 p.m. at Bulwagang Amado Hernandez (Conference Room), Upper Basement, CCP Main Building.

Those auditioning must be at least 18 years old. They must prepare a three-minute monologue in Filipino from a published foreign or local play, any song of their choice, a short movement piece, and must be able to deliver a joke.

Fifteen scholars/apprentices will be privileged to undergo regular classes in acting, stage movement, voice and script analysis. Participants will also get the opportunity to audition for CCP performances, access the facilities of the center and interact with world-class theater artists.

THE TP Actors' Company in "ZsaZsa Zaturnnah (Ze Muzikal)"

Those interested may handcarry their resumé with 2" x 2" photo (or bigger) or send them to the TP office at the 2/F Production Design Center Bldg. (behind CCP Main Bldg.), CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, or e-mail ccptanghalan@yahoo.com

Call the TP office Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at 8323661 or 8321125 locals 1620/1621.

Full-color Boracay guidebook

ENCYCLEA PUBLICATIONS HAS released "Boracay—The Island Guide," a guidebook to the famous summer destination.

The book provides a wealth of information on the island's 130 resorts and hotels, as well as numerous dining and shopping spots, and sports and leisure activities.

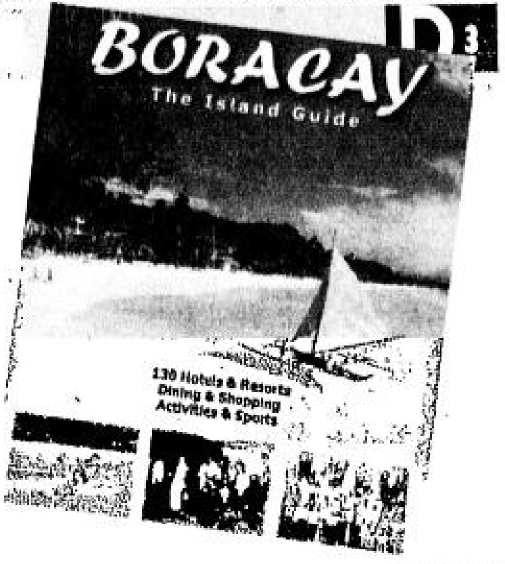
Written in basic English and filled with vibrant photos, the books has general information on the island. It contains the telephone numbers and websites of airlines flying there.

It also provides a list of annual events on the island, porter rates, local banks, modes of transportation, vehicle rentals, medical services, emergency numbers, Filipino vocabulary, safety and security tips and more. It has 10 pages of detailed maps of Boracay island, White Beach and D'Mall.

The full-color guidebook provides the most detailed hotel and resort information with accurate GPS cartography. The dining chapter features 25 top restaurants on the island.

The book also surveys the island's exotic sights and new destinations, as well as the best souvenir finds and native delicacies.

The book is available at National Bookstore, Powerbooks, Fully Booked, Boracay Tourist Center and hotel newsstands. Call 7256262 loc. 234 or 230.



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But this is not all. This year, in celebration of Mother's Day, HUGGIES® is giving mothers even more for their money's worth, with the HUGGIES® Value For Mommy VALUE NA, SUWERTE PA promo, which runs for the whole month of May at selected supermarkets nationwide. With this promo, every purchase of HUGGIES® Dry, HUGGIES® Dry Comfort, or HUGGIES® Pull-ups diapers worth P150 entitles you to a range of instant prizes and/or a raffle entry (depending on which supermarket the purchase was made) to win thousands of pesos worth of shopping gift certificates. The instant prizes, which may be won through a variety of fun games at the HUGGIES® booth, range from free HUGGIES® diapers to practical gifts like tote bags, baby towels and bath sponges. Consolation prizes are also given away, so no mommy goes home empty-handed.

Participating supermarkets include: The Landmark; SM Supermarkets (Megamall, Makati, Manila, San Lazaro, Southmall, Fairview, Bacoor, Lucena, Molino, Bicutan, Sucat, Valenzuela, Marilao); and Robinsons (Ermita, Galleria, Starmills, Tutuban, Metropolis, Balibago, Pioneer, Metro East, Novaliches, Imus, Sta. Rosa, Lipa, Cainta, Dasmarinas).

With the Value For Mommy program—plus the VALUE NA, SUWERTE PA promo— HUGGIES® is undoubtedly the most mommy-friendly diaper brand in the market. So if you want to be smart about choosing your baby's diapers, buy HUGGIES® now!

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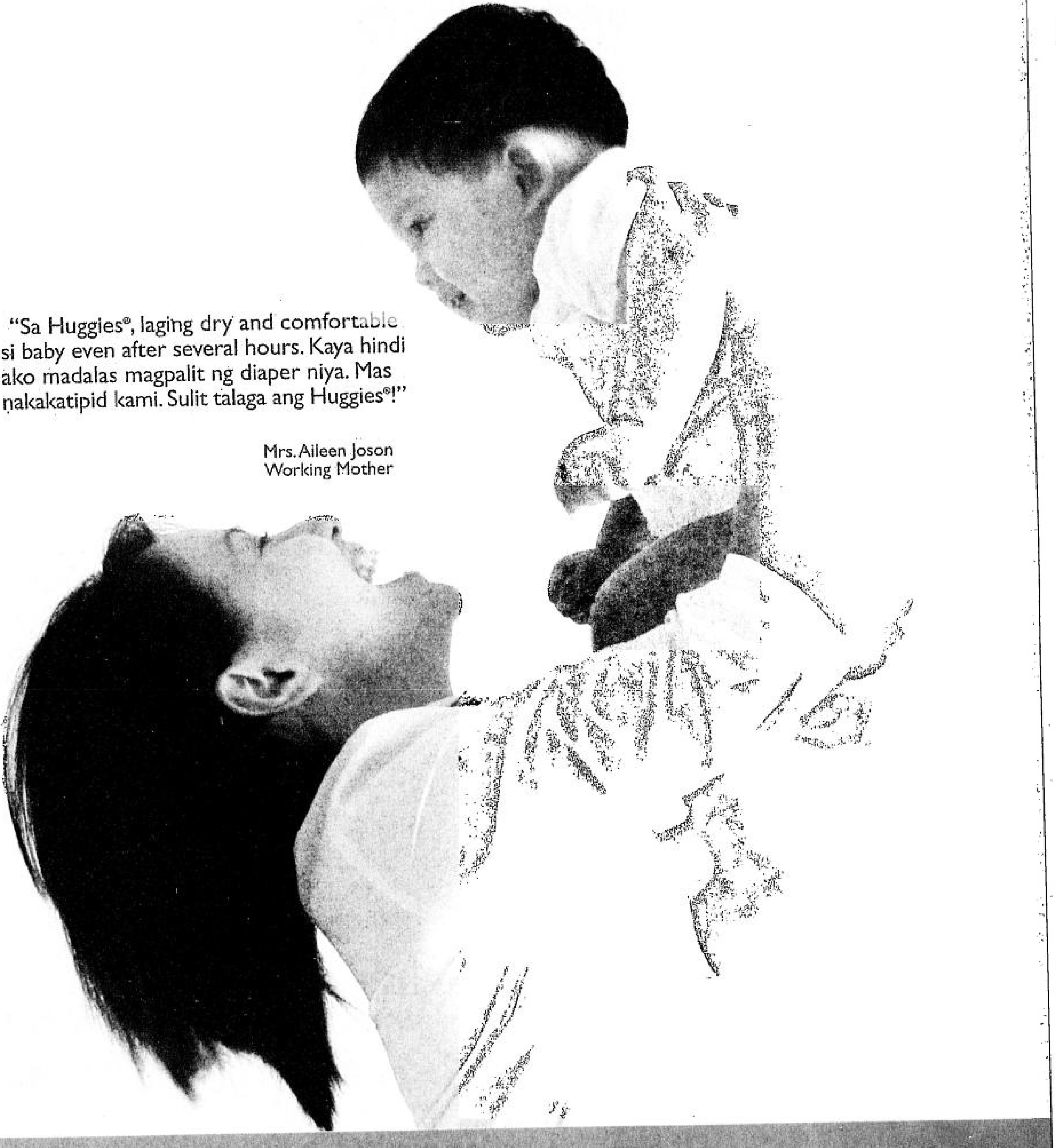

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Top stars come out in Metro and Metro hiM's latest issues

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CHEAP COOL: Oriental Bohemia
8 key looks
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Be Inspired to Create Your Own Destiny
HOW TO GET BROADER SHOULDERS
10 Minutes a Week to a Fresher, Younger Face
LEARN TO LOVE MONEY AND GET RICH
Dennis Trillo
The Quiet Mystery

THE MAY ISSUE OF Metro Magazine features the jewels of ABS-CBN's Star Magic—Claudine Barretto, Bea Alonzo, Kristine Hermosa, Angelica Panganiban, Shaina Magdayao and Maja Salvador—with television director and talent developer Johnny Manahan on the cover.

The Star Magic talents are rendered as portraits inside by photographer Sara Black. They talk about their struggles in show business, the gossip about them, and their beauty and fashion secrets.

Also featured are canine celebrities—the beloved pooches of Patricia Cojuangco, Celine Lopez and Angel Jacob.

Other features are fast-slimming tips that don't need crash dieting, career women who have scaled down work for mommyhood; the season's sexy neutrals and pale, shimmery makeup; Camarines Sur as a tropical getaway; and the latest in music, books, fashion and health trends.

Top guns

Much-awarded young actor Dennis Trillo graces the cover of the latest issue of Metro hiM magazine.

There are also features on advertising man David Guerrero, Juan Elizalde, and other leading talents in the corporate world, film and art.

Metro hiM also presents a new look for men—the Oriental bohemian—which adds an Eastern twist to the romantic style of the vagabond gypsy. It also provides dress tips for short guys.

Metro and Metro hiM are available at leading bookstores and magazine outlets nationwide.

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ACCESSORIES SPECIAL
LOVE THAT DOG!
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GET GORGEOUS THE CELEB WAY
P130

Boys school offers scholarship grants

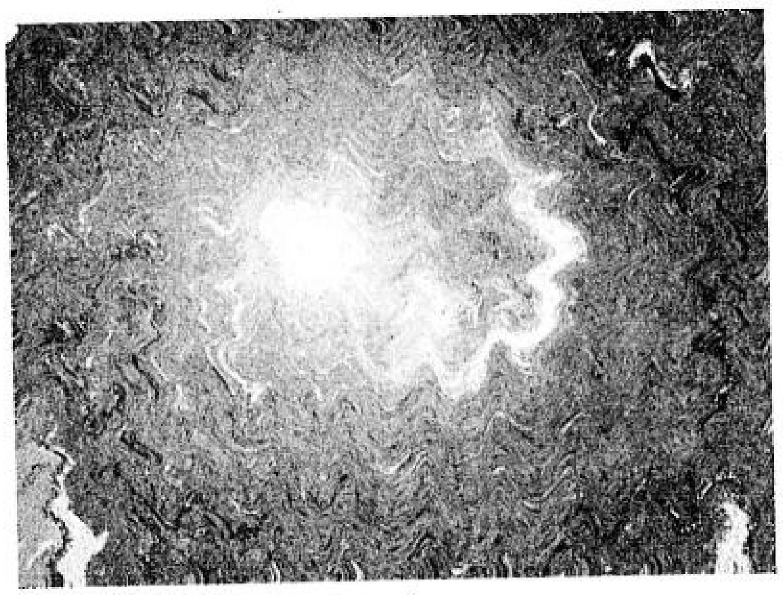
SOUTHRIDGE, A SCHOOL FOR BOYS IN Alabang run by the Parents for Education Foundation Inc. (PAREF), offers scholarships to less-privileged but deserving male students.

The scholarship program started in 1987, with the Southridge night school, which was patterned after Tamajar, a school providing Christian education for poor boys in Madrid, Spain. Now on its 19th year, and renamed two years ago as the afternoon session, Southridge's scholarship program has helped almost 500 male students from Metro Manila.

Two years ago, Southridge started giving scholarships as well to the regular day-school students. For this school year, the school is accepting applications for scholarship for its primary and high-school levels.

Southridge seeks a balance between academic and personal formation. Its scholarship program seeks to mold responsible men and future leaders of the country.

Call 8420506 to 07 or 8077719 to 21. Application forms can be downloaded from www.southridge.edu.ph or e-mail southridge @southridge.edu.ph

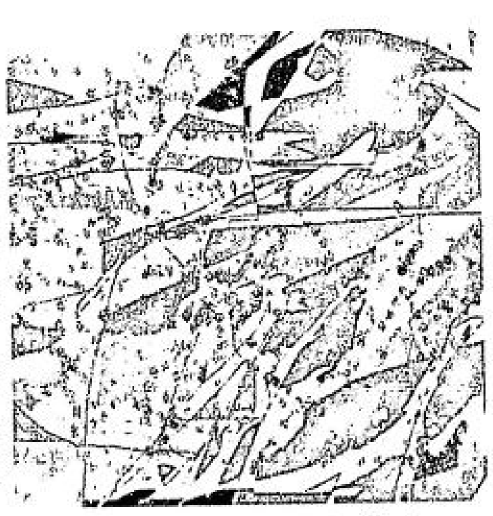


"A SCORCHING Mid-Summer Day"

Child artist holds exhibit of digital paintings

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD Ninotchka "Nika" Manzano will show over 100 digital paintings in her exhibit, "Ninotchka/Nika: A Celebration of God's Grace, Providence and Restoration," which formally opens today, 1 p.m., at the Art Center of SM Megamall.

Manzano uses Paint accessory and Photoshop software to create her works, which display vibrant colors and dramatic verve.



"MY AMAZING World of Colors"

The exhibit is presented by the House of Worship-Visionary Church International.

Call 8753755 or 0921-2473210. E-mail ricky2manzano@yahoo.com or ninotchkamanzano@yahoo.com.ph

University grants scholarships to music-inclined students

GLAIZA ALCOVER, A SOPHOMORE AT Feati University, is gifted with a melodious voice.

She's the seventh of eight children. To help ease her family's financial worries, she joined the Feati University Choir, whose members receive 50-percent discount on tuition.

Like Glaiza, Feati juniors Ian Manalo and Julius Gonzales rely on their musical talents to earn a college diploma. Ian plays the trumpet, while Julius is a saxophonist of the Feati Brass Band. As members, they are entitled to free tuition, as well as free miscellaneous, laboratory and development fees.

Apart from financial assistance, the scholars are also able to hone their talents under the guidance of skilled professionals. Feati Choir conductor Excelsis Betil is a member of the San Miguel Master Chorale, while Brass Band director Nhell Ramos is the principal trombone player of the National Philharmonic Orchestra.

More than the scholarship, Glaiza, Ian and Julius say the best thing about being a member of the choir and brass band are the friendships formed, memorable experiences and the chance to represent their university with great pride wherever they perform.

Apart from various important school programs, the Feati Choir has performed in several out-of-town events. Last year, the 40-piece Feati Brass Band rendered marching music at the 23rd Southeast Asian Games's flag-raising ceremonies in Rizal Park, Manila.

Besides the choir and brass band, Feati grants scholarships to those who excel in academics, as well as to university athletes. Financial aid is offered to student assistants and dependents of Feati employees.

The Don Salvador Araneta and Doña Victoria Araneta scholarships are awarded to students who have achieved a minimum of 85 percent grade point average in high school, and garnered the highest grade in the Feati scholarship exam. Awardees of this scholarship are entitled to free tuition and discounts on other fees.

For six decades, Feati University has produced competitive alumni. The school sustains this by assembling competent professors, updating the curriculum, and upgrading laboratories, classrooms and facilities.

Call 7338321 to 25, locals 114 and 139.

SINGERS AND SCHOLARS—Members of the Feati University Choir use their voice as capital for acquiring good education.

FIRST-PRIZE winner Pio Del Pilar Elementary School with Me-an Cabrera and Thea Tan of Gardenia, and school officials.

Kids excel in recycled art contest

GARDENIA IN PARTNERSHIP with the Department of Education recently held its second Metro Manila-wide Eco-Art contest with the theme "A healthy bread for a healthy you."

The contest was participated in by 42 elementary schools in the National Capital Region whose students competed in creating original artworks out of recycled Gardenia wrappers.

Art teachers honored

FABER-CASTELL, DISTRIBUTOR of art materials, recently announced the winners of its first Annual Sining Award for art teachers.

The grand prize winner is Josefina Santiago-Pineda of the Mariano Ponce Elementary School in Tondo, Manila who believes in the Multiple Intelligences Learning Styles.

Pineda employs different strategies in teaching, integrating different subjects such as geography, music and dance in her art classes.

The school's principal, Dr. Violeta Q. de los Santos, said "Apart from spearheading the putting up of mural exhibits in the school as a culminating activity of her Special Art class, Josie also initiated the use of interactive storytelling. This innovative technique has been adopted by other teachers in Manila since it produced desirable results in terms of pupil participation and involvement."

"An art teacher should not forget that his or her teaching should be child centered. An art education teacher should keep in mind that teaching is an art, and to be an effective teacher, one should not be confined to traditional or stereotyped ways of teaching," Pineda said.

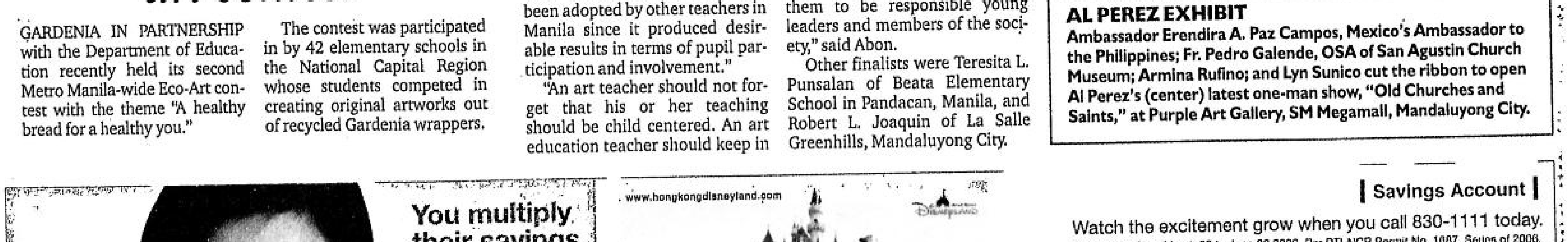
A finalist is Orlando P. Abon of St. Mary's Academy in Pasay City. He is president of the Philippine Art Educators Association and former chair of the Catholic Educators Association of the Philippines.

Also a children's book author, Abon said that "art is life," so learners should be allowed to fully explore their world through artistic avenues.

"I let my pupils freely express their emotions, opinions, ideas and thoughts through various media and activities that will hone their skills and develop them to be responsible young leaders and members of the society," said Abon.

Other finalists were Teresita L. Punsalan of Beata Elementary School in Pandacan, Manila, and Robert L. Joaquin of La Salle Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

AL PEREZ EXHIBIT
Ambassador Erendira A. Paz Campos, Mexico's Ambassador to the Philippines; Fr. Pedro Galende, OSA of San Agustin Church Museum; Armina Rufino; and Lyn Sunico cut the ribbon to open Al Perez's (center) latest one-man show, "Old Churches and Saints," at Purple Art Gallery, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.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